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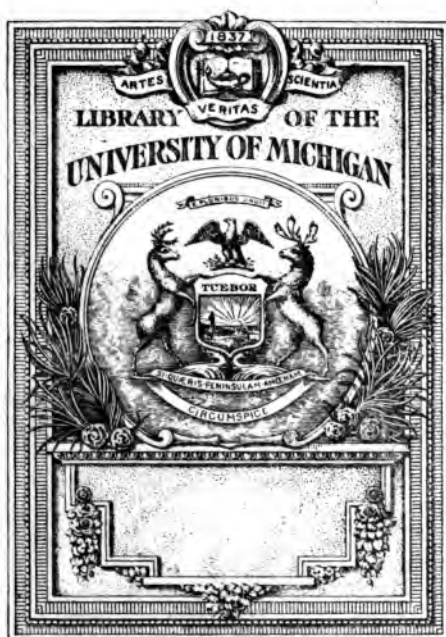
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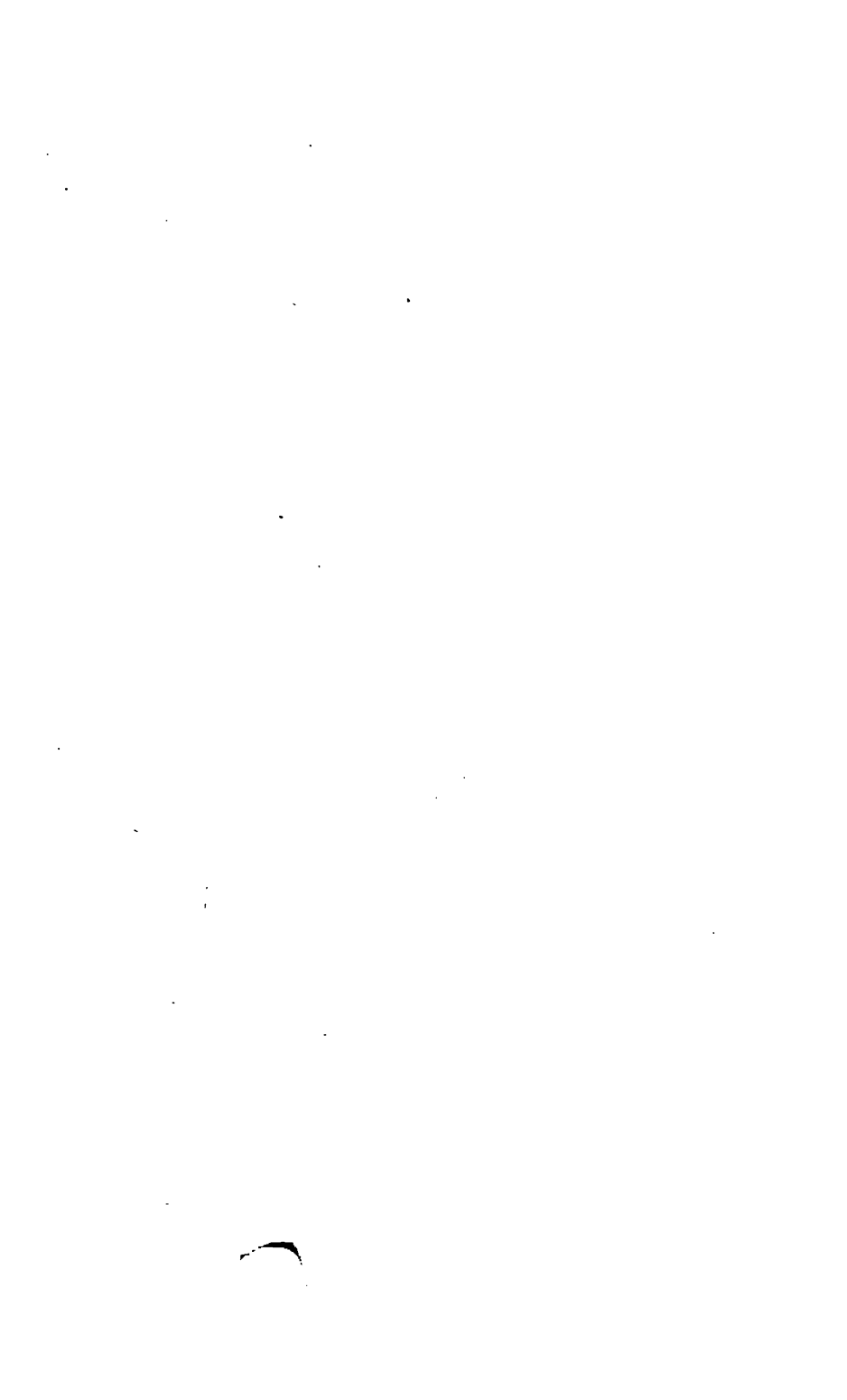
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The Hand-Made Gentleman





HE SHOOK HIS CANE OVER THE



Harrison

See page 218

His eyes glowed like a prophet's

100

IRVING BACHELLER'S WORKS
PINE TREE EDITION

THE
HAND-MADE GENTLEMAN



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON



Copyright, 1909, by IRVING BACHELLER

Printed in the United States of America

TO
MY DEAR FRIEND
E. PRENTISS BAILEY

367812



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Some Account of Him

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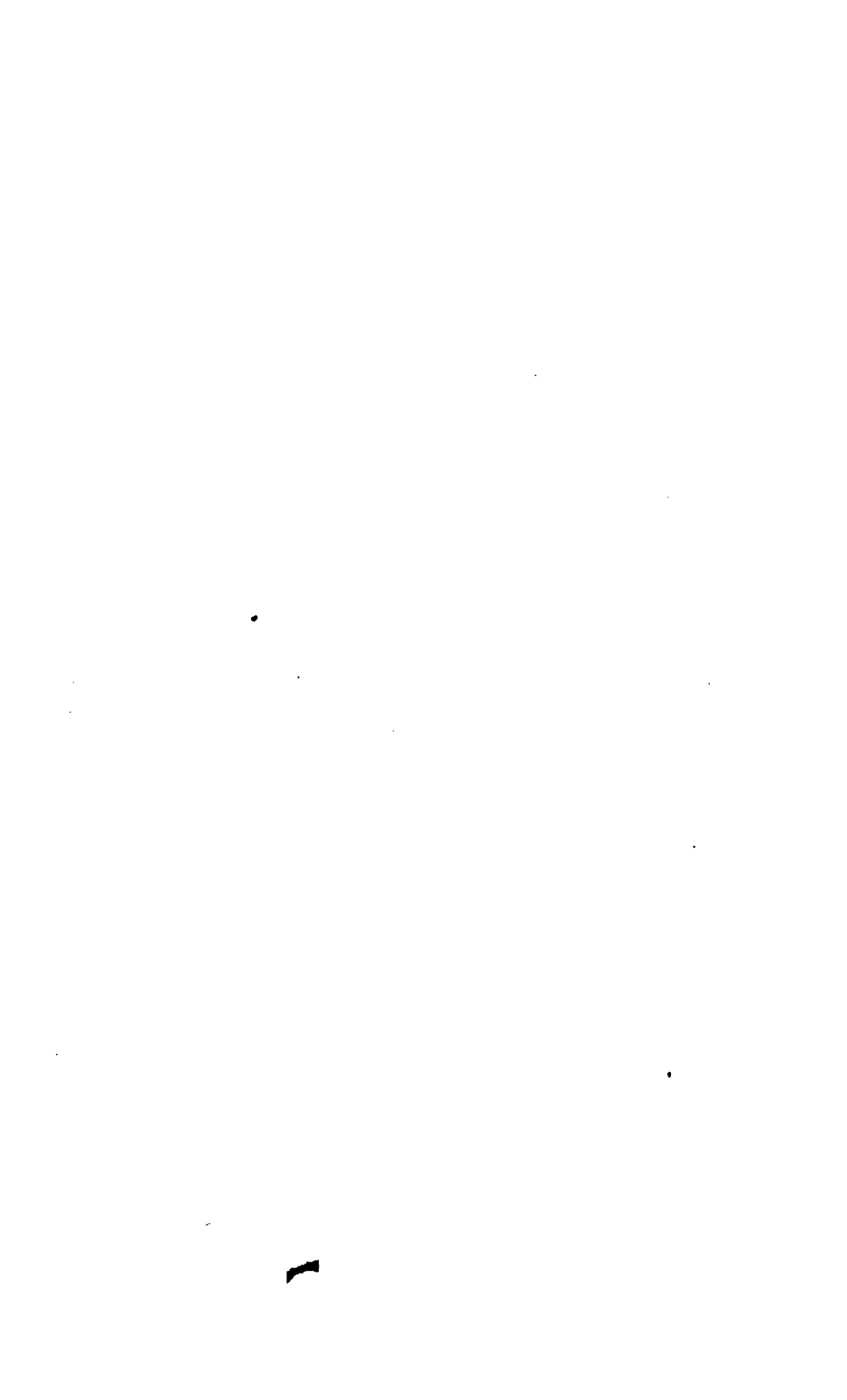
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Foreword

THIS is a tale of youth—of its loves and dreams and hazards, and of the incredible riches of purity which often belong to it.

Many of the adventures which led to the Hand-Made Gentleman and the shop at Rushwater are from the author's own experience. Pearl is a composite of Davenport (the country blacksmith who invented an electric motor in 1833) and of a certain modest veteran of northern New York.

It tells how steam-power chose its first long pathway and began its swift errands from the Atlantic to the middle continent; how the roar and rush of the water-floods betrayed their secret and suggested the coming of great things; how "the horses of the river" began to tread the turbine and yield their power to man; how the spirit of new enterprise contended with conservatism, ignorance, and greed in the capitals, and how, thereby, evils developed which we are now striving to correct.

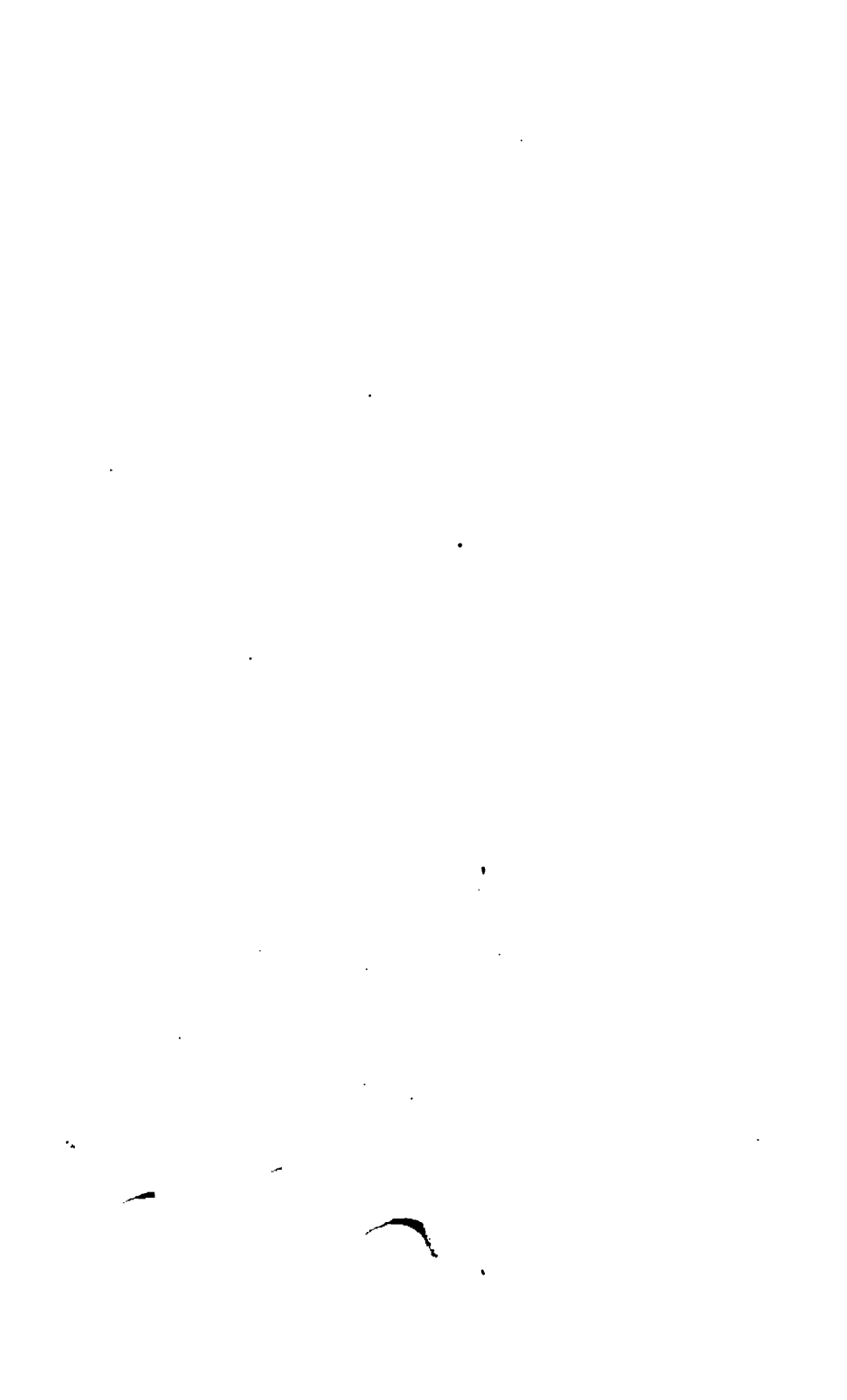
Foreword

For its background of railroad and political history the author is indebted to many forgotten records, and to his friends A. Barton Hepburn, William C. Hudson, Arthur D. Chandler, and Mark D. Wilber, an honored Assemblyman in the sessions of 1865, 1866, and 1867, and later United States District Attorney. For the color of the day in Pittsburg, at the close of the war, he is under obligation to Mr. Andrew Carnegie; for that of Black Friday, to Mr. Thomas A. Edison.

The author has held to no strict observance of the unity of place, the work of his characters being that of turning the State into one neighborhood.

Book One

**In which the Adventures of Cricket are
Presented, with Some Account of Him**



The Hand-Made Gentleman

A Tale of the Battles of Peace

ADVENTURE I

BEING THAT OF CRICKET AND THE CHILD GHOST



WAS born in 1843. Since then I have endured many perils, of which I shall try to tell you. First of all, there was the peril of being named Solomon; and it would appear that, for a day or two, I was threatened also with the name of Zephaniah, but escaped at last with the lighter penalty of Jacob.

When I found myself I had just printed my full name in big letters on a slate—Jacob Ezra Heron. I have had some success, but—bless you!—it is poverty when I think of the sense of riches that I had that day. I will try to give only the merest outline of my chief assets, and

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they were: this name, which was all my own; a mother, who was the joint possession of myself and my sister, four years older than I; one friend of the name of Lizzie McCormick, and one little green book which was a legacy from my grandmother. I had practically no liabilities save a number of unpunished sins.

Now, a little as to my schedule of assets. First of all, there is the boy indicated by the name on my slate—a small boy five years old. I was in the little red school-house. My eyes were not much above the level of my reading-book that rested on the teacher's knee. The watch at her belt seemed to prattle in my ear as if to put me out, and, when she opened the hateful thing, I felt sure it complained of me, for immediately she grew impatient. I was afraid, and spoke scarcely any louder than the watch itself. I feared that somebody would do something to me, and I had three occupations—looking out for danger, drawing cats, and printing my name on a slate.

Every evening I used to sit by the fireside in my little chair and rock and sing. My mother called me Cricket, because I was small and spry and cheerful. Others called me Cricket because she did.

Now, an important item in the schedule is my

Cricket and the Child Ghost

friend and confidant, Lizzie McCormick. She was one of the most remarkable things that ever was, being much and yet nothing. She was a myth—a creation of my fancy—but almost as real as any of you sitting here. There was a drunken old bachelor of the name of McCormick who lived not far away, and Lizzie claimed that she was his girl. I made her acquaintance one day when I had been very bad and was shut in my room alone. She sprang out of the air suddenly, and sat down beside me on the rag carpet, and made a gulping sound—like that of “a hen with the pip,” as our washerwoman said when I tried to make the sound for her. Lizzie was a freckled girl with red hair and a very long neck, and gold teeth and a wooden leg, because she had been shot in the war.

We played marbles together, and talked freely in a tongue so “foreign” that no human being could understand it, as my mother informed me later. She showed me her trinkets, and among them was a thing she called “a silver horruck,” which Santa Claus had brought to her—a shiny thing that looked like a goose’s leg. She was with me a good deal after that, and always slept with me in my trundle-bed. In due time she began to do and say things for which I was held responsible, and eventually became a

The Hand-Made Gentleman

ghost, when I would have no more to do with her.

You will remember I spoke of the little green book. It was kept in a high drawer. Often I begged for a look at it, and when my mother opened the drawer I was on my tiptoes and reaching for the sacred thing. When I had looked at the pictures she put it away again very tenderly.

Well, that is about as things stood with me in my childhood. I have given you a core out of the bed-rock, and let it go at that—saving one circumstance. It will all help you to understand me.

I come now to the true tales, which are better for the fireside, on a white Christmas, than all that kind of thing. First, I shall tell you the very brief adventure of

CRICKET AND THE CHILD GHOST

Go back with me to the winter of 1850, when hard times travelled over the land like a pestilence, and even entered the houses of the great. I was in my seventh year, and my assets had been largely increased by the steady friendship of Santa Claus. But he was going to pass me that year, the times being harder for him than

Cricket and the Child Ghost

for other people. I felt sorry for him, and sorry for my sister and mother, and sorry, too, for myself.

Well, it was the day before Christmas, and I had been to school and was on my way home alone, my sister being ill, and night was near. Suddenly I became aware that Lizzie McCormick was limping along beside me.

"It don't pay to be good," said she, impatiently.

"I've been very good for a long, long time," I answered. "I've filled the wood-box every night an' morning, an' I gave half my candy to Sarah. I guess God was surprised."

"So was Sarah," she answered, as I recalled the delight of my sister.

I thought a moment and then said, "God loves me."

"Why don't he give you a pair of new boots, then?"

"It's hard times."

"He gives 'em to some children."

I felt of the treasure, which I had concealed in my pocket, and wondered whether, under the circumstances, I had better let it go. I tried to take a look at it, but the air was dusky and I could not see.

"Come on!" Lizzie called, swinging her wood-

The Hand-Made Gentleman

en leg very fast and keeping ahead of me. "I ain't going home. I'm going to see if I can find Santa Claus."

"So 'm I," was my answer. "Maybe he'll give us a ride."

We hurried along without speaking until I saw how dark it was, and knew that we were a long way from home.

"My mother will be looking for me!" I called, with a little sob.

Lizzie stopped and again made a sound like that of a hen with the pip, and I knew it to be a token of her contempt for me.

"I don't believe there is any Santa Claus," she remarked, presently.

I had been thinking of that. The faith of my childhood was failing a little, but I clung to the dear old saint and could not let him go. However, I was on the brink of change.

In a moment Lizzie put her hand in my coat-pocket.

"There," said she, "see what you've got now."

I felt, and upon my word there was something hard in my pocket wrapped in tissue-paper, and it felt very promising.

"It's a real horruck," said she; "I am going to give it to you."

Cricket and the Child Ghost

Then I saw her hand moving before my face. I put up my own hand, but hers began to fly around in the air, and I could not touch it. Now I suddenly remembered that ghosts had a trick of that kind, for so the washerwoman had informed me. For the first time I began to think of the word, and felt its mystery. Lizzie stood shivering, and a sound came out of her mouth like wind whistling in a chimney.

"You go 'way!" I cried, in a fright.

Lizzie turned and looked at me and uttered a cry of fear, and began to run. Her clothes had a strange rustle, and I could scarcely see her in the darkness. She seemed to run up a stairway into the snowy air, and was out of sight in a jiffy. Then I could hear her screaming to me in a dark tree-top, as if she saw something terrible.

"Look out, Cricket! Look out! Look out!"

I was in a panic of fear, knowing not the peril that threatened me. I struggled through the drifts and ran till I could see the lights of the village. The sight allayed my fear a little.

I had heard that hymn-singing was good in time of peril, and I began to walk and sing, with a trembling voice, the Christmas hymn which my mother had lately taught me.

The Hand-Made Gentleman

Soon I knelt for a moment in the snow and said my prayers. Then I rose and ran on, singing as I went, and thought less of my peril. Soon teams began to pass me, coming and going, and my fear was gone.

I felt for my horruck. It was in my pocket, all right, and the feel of it began to fill me with wonder. I forgot it when I came to one of the stores, and entered behind the legs of a tall man, and stopped before a basket of oranges, and stood looking down at them. There were a number of people in the store.

"Would you like one?" a man asked me.

"I—I haven't any money," was my answer.

"Put one in your pocket," he whispered; "they wouldn't know."

I shook my head, and answered in a voice so low that he held his ear down to catch the words:

"It doesn't belong to me."

He lifted me in his arms and asked my name, and I gave it, and told him that I was out looking for Santa Claus.

"Isn't he coming to your house?" the man asked.

I shook my head.

"Why not?"

"'Cause it's hard times," I whispered.

Cricket and the Child Ghost

Well, it was the storekeeper himself, and he kissed me and sat me on the counter and gave me fruits and candies.

"Would you like to speak to Santa Claus?" he asked.

I nodded, and my heart began to beat all the faster.

He went to the rear end of the store and returned quickly with a stout, gray-headed man in a big fur overcoat. I recognized the figure, and was almost overcome with emotion. The thought of my mission bore me up. With a trembling hand I took from my pocket the little green book which my grandmother had given to me, and which was, indeed, my greatest treasure. I had removed it slyly from the bureau drawer that morning. I held it toward him. No human being ever offered more to charity.

"That's a Christmas present for you," I said, fearfully.

He took my little book, and read the title on its green paper cover aloud.

I spoke up faintly as soon as he had finished, saying, "My grandmother gave it to me—you can have it."

"Thanks," said he, and laughed, which so took me down that I could not keep back my tears.

The Hand-Made Gentleman

"Are you a good boy?" he asked.

"He's one of the best boys in the county, and I'm going to keep track of him," said the store-keeper, and I was glad, for I was not able to answer.

"Now," said he to Santa Claus, "I want you to take him home and give them all a merry Christmas."

Well, they put a little fur coat upon me and a piece of goat-skin for a beard, and a baby pack-basket, and filled it with grand things for my mother and sister, and put a stub of a pipe in my mouth.

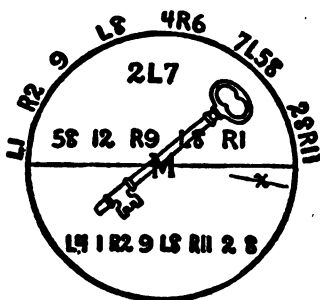
The man took me home, and I was forgiven, I fancy, on account of my looks, for who could punish a fairy Santa Claus? And, all in all, what a merry Christmas we had! I had exchanged the little green book for something better, of which I shall try to tell you.

As to Lizzie McCormick, she remained a ghost, and probably found better company, for I never saw her again, although sometimes I have heard her whisper in the darkness. She taught me that ghosts are easily conquered if a boy will be stern with them.

But there remains with me a strange souvenir of our parting, and that is the horruck. It was

Cricket and the Child Ghost

a real thing; I have it now, a big silver dollar. Here it is. Look at the odd device stamped on the face of the coin:



I assure you, for many a long year it was the great mystery of our house. And I got a certain fear of it by-and-by, knowing, as I did, that a ghost gave it to me.

ADVENTURE II

BEING THAT OF CRICKET AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE



MY home had been a grist-mill in old times, and stood on the river-shore near a small village. One side of it was in the stream, but firmly founded on a ledge, and the year round water roared through a part of the basement. A hanging stairway climbed the face of the mill to a narrow landing under its eaves. There a broad door with a clanking iron latch opened upon our home. Those days it was called the Mill House, and a pretty thing it was—weathered gray, with broad windows that had small panes in them, and vines and flowers on the ledges in summer-time, and honeysuckle on the stair side.

When I look back at the old house the sun is ever shining on it and the flowers are in full bloom, and I can see the lights and shadows of the river. It was a full flowing stream, smooth

Cricket and the Pearl of Great Price

and silent above the mill, and stained and sprinkled with willow gloom; white and noisy just below, where the waters hurtled over a natural dam of rocks. It put me in mind of the sea, toward which it was ever flowing, and which I had studied with a curious eye in my geography. The river always seemed to invite me to go along with it.

Well, one day, when near the end of my fifteenth year, I accepted its invitation—launched my new canoe and went away with the swift water. It was a clear, warm day, and the river gave me rare entertainment, with its reeds and wild roses and quiet little bays and green, sloping terraces, and birds and beasts. Where it bent to the edge of the highway I saw a man sitting on the bank—a lank, tall man, with white hair and a full, gray beard. A black setter dog with tan points sat beside him.

“Happy new year!” said the man.

I made no answer, but swung into the bay near him and stopped.

“Didn’t you know that a new year begins every day?” he asked. He showed the wear of hard times. He had a shoe on one foot and a slipper on the other, and wore a soiled linen duster and a pair of goggles. I saw now that his face had been badly scarred. He had a nose

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large at the end, with white and red seams in it, which cut across the cheek to his temple on one side.

"I can tell you something almighty singular," he went on.

"What's that?" was my query.

He took off a shabby felt hat, spat into the river, and drew his hand across his mouth.

"My name is Pearl," said he; "I am the Pearl o' great price."

I smiled, but he looked very serious.

"I am weary o' life," he continued. "I came down to this river to drown myself, but I am unable to do it on account o' my meanness. It's a pity."

I waited, full of curiosity, while he sat and whittled.

"My life is insured—that's what's the matter," he went on. "You see, I took out a policy years ago an' paid for it, an' an' ol' buzzard got it for a few dollars that I owed him. If I die the meanest man in the world 'll git a thousand dollars, an' it won't do; come to think it over, I've got to outlive him if it takes a hundred years."

He threw his slippered foot over his knee, laughed silently, and shook his head.

"That's one on me," he remarked. "It ain't decent for me to laugh, but I can't help it."

Cricket and the Pearl of Great Price

"Are you sick?" I asked.

"Not exac'ly sick," he answered. "When I behave myself I wouldn't know that I had a body if it wasn't for my big toe that keeps peekin' through my shoe leather. Sometimes it makes a bow, very p'lite, an' says, 'Hello, there!'"

He rose and took off his hat. "Look at me—ain't I a gem?" he added.

"I'm sorry for you," I suggested.

"That's good! I'm tired o' bein' sorry for myself, an' glad to have some one 'tend to that part o' my business."

He called the dog to his feet, put a hand on his head, and introduced him in this manner:

"This is my friend and fellow-citizen, Mr. Barker—Adam Barker bein' his full name. You see before you the firm of Pearl & Company."

I smiled, and thought him an odd man.

"Mr. Barker, please take the floor," he commanded.

The dog stood on his hind feet with a look of eager expectancy.

"Mr. Barker, I swear to you that hereafter I will be worthy of your love," said the stranger. "Shall the firm continue? Those in favor will please say aye."

The dog gave a bark, and his master said: "It seems to be carried; it is carried. Is

The Hand-Made Gentleman

there any further business to come before this meetin'?"

Mr. Barker answered.

"Then we stand adjourned," said the man, whereupon the dog began to jump playfully. "Pearl & Company are now ready to resume business."

Man and dog sat looking at me.

"We can do anything," he went on. "Bring us a pig's tail an' we'll make a whistle of it; bring us a ton of iron an' we'll build a steam-engine. I put in the skill an' labor, an' Mr. Barker furnishes the company. Got to have that in every kind o' business."

I made no answer, but sat looking at this wonderful man.

"Where ye goin'?" he asked.

"Down the river."

"So 'm I," said he. "Give me the stern seat an' I'll furnish the power. If you're goin' to be sorry for me, you'll have enough to do."

I swung her stern to the shore and let them in. He took the paddle, and the dog a place between us.

"Handsome little river—this here," said my new friend, as he cut the ripples with a powerful stroke. "Think o' the strength of her," he went on presently; "she keeps a-pushin' night an' day.

Cricket and the Pearl of Great Price

The power of a thousand horses couldn't hold her for a second. If she only had brains she could do half the work o' the county." After a moment's silence, he added: "If somebody would go into partnership with her and put up brains against her strength, the firm would do wonders."

That view of the river was new to me.

"Did you ever see Niagara Falls?" the stranger asked.

"No."

"You must go and see that big water-hammer hit the side o' the world. It weighs a million tons or more, an' swings a hundred an' fifty feet, an' for a dozen miles you can hear the boom of it. Think o' the power in that blow. One o' these days it's goin' to help push us along an' kick a lot o' things out of our way. Down below, the rapids run like wild horses. I call 'em God's horses. One o' these days they'll put 'em on the tread."

"On the tread!" I exclaimed.

"Yes; every one of 'em 'll tread a turbine an' move a belt, an' then—" He paused and spat over the gunwale, and I looked at him full of wonder. "'Lectricity!" he exclaimed; "streams and rivers o' lightnin'!"

His words impressed me deeply, but I did not

The Hand-Made Gentleman

fully comprehend them until more familiar with his habit of putting his thought into terms of power. But I thought often of the "big water-hammer" and of "God's horses."

"Look at the fish," he said, after a moment of impressive silence. "One of 'em just looked up an' winked at me real insultin'. I don' know but we'd better get offended an' go after 'em."

"No tackle," was my answer.

"We'll make some," said he, promptly. "We're goin' to be hungry by-an'-by."

He went ashore, stripped some bark off a willow, split it into strands, and began to braid them. In a few moments he had made a fairly good line, and tied it to the end of a pole.

"Will you have a snare or a hook?" he asked. "I can make ary one."

"A snare," I answered, for I had never seen a snare.

He removed a piece of wire from the anchoring, made a loop, and fastened the line upon it.

"Now slip that over their noses an' jerk," he said, as he passed the pole to me.

He worked the paddle and I the pole, and soon we had half a dozen fish, and quite enough for a meal.

"It's time that we organized for dinner," said

Cricket and the Pearl of Great Price

he. "I'll be the cook if you'll be the commissary."

"All right," I answered.

"Do not be surprised if you find salt an' pepper in yon farm-house," he suggested.

I went to the house indicated, which was not a stone's-throw from the river-bank, and there a woman gave me all I sought, and, when she had learned my name, added butter and half a loaf of bread and a bit of shortcake.

"You are promoted for meritorious conduct," said the Pearl, on my return. "You are appointed corporal of the guard, and will have nothing to do now but keep the cows out o' camp."

He had built his fire in a grove that flung its shade over a bit of still water. There a number of cattle had gathered, and were gazing at us. Soon a bull came roaring into camp, and stood and pawed the earth and threatened me. I cut him with a beech-rod, and drove him away.

"You are promoted for bravery," said the Pearl of great price; "I appoint you my friend for life."

He gave me his hand, and I looked up at him with amusement.

"Do you accept the appointment?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, for I was delighted with my new acquaintance.

The Hand-Made Gentleman

"Good!" said he, "and I promise, boy, that H. M. Pearl, Esquire, will never bring the blush of shame to your cheek, and I am yours truly, now an' forever—one an' inseparable." In a moment he added: "I ain't pretty, but I can be decent, you see."

I enjoyed him more than the dinner, and we made a wonderful day of it. After an hour's rest we set out again, and near three o'clock landed at the little village of Mill Pond, some ten miles away. From the shore I could see on a store-front the sign

SAM WEATHERBY'S EMPORIUM

A man stood on the steps of the emporium looking at us.

"Well, Pearl, is that you?" he exclaimed as we drew near.

"It's me, but it ain't Pearl," my friend answered.

"How's that?"

"Turned over a new leaf. The late H. M. Pearl is now H. M. Pearl, Esquire. This is my friend. His name is—"

"Heron," I said.

"Not Cricket Heron?" the stranger asked. I nodded.

Cricket and the Pearl of Great Price

"Don't you remember coming to my store at Heartsdale one Christmas eve?"

"And you said you would keep track of me?"

"Yes. I moved down the river long ago, and I've been thinking for a month that I would go and have a talk with you and your mother. I want a clerk, and if you wish to learn a good business I'll take you in."

Well, he showed me through the store, and I was much elated, and told about the child ghost and all the details of my straying that Christmas eve, and showed them my horruck, and Mr. Pearl sat down to study it.

"I shall have to go," I said, as he reluctantly surrendered the coin; "good-bye."

"Not now," he answered. "It's a hard pull against the current, an' I'm goin' to take you home. You wouldn't get there till to-morrow mornin.'"

Well, he *would* go with me, and so we set out together—the Pearl having left his dog with Mr. Weatherby. As we made our way upstream he told me tales full of the oddest fancies.

By-and-by it grew dark, and I could hear only the dip of his paddle and water washing on the bow.

"Say," he exclaimed, suddenly, "that's an

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awful curious riddle that you've got in your pocket there."

"What do you make of it?" I asked.

He seemed not to hear me, but continued to work his paddle in silence until we got out below the Mill House.

"Did you ever hear of the ghost riddles?" he asked, presently.

"No."

"Well, I wouldn't wonder if it was one of 'em."

"What are the ghost riddles?" I asked.

"I'll tell you some time; my sister had one give to her," he said, as he started down the river.

"I want you to stay all night with us!" I called. But I could hear only the sound of his feet on the gravel as they hurried away.

ADVENTURE III

BEING THAT OF THE BUNGWOOD COW



THAT week my clerkship began with Mr. Weatherby. To my great disappointment "the Pearl of great price" had left the village of Mill Pond, having gone nobody knew where.

It was my duty to sweep the floor and clean the windows, pump the kerosene, draw the West India molasses, and, when not otherwise employed, to sell tea, candy, and tobacco. The kerosene department took most of my time.

Of course, I was in love with a girl much older than I, but the odor of petroleum, which, in spite of soap and water, maintained its hold upon me day and night, gave me the feeling of a tethered dog. Hope would not live with it, somehow. Then my face itself was so innocent of beard, beauty, or manliness. The little mirror which hung in a corner of the store flung back at me, always, a look of sheer contempt. One day, when I was

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alone, I took a store razor and began my first shave. As I went on, my face seemed to be enlarging and taking a highly serious view of itself. I stood by the mirror feeling it. As I did so, secret and burning thoughts began to move my tongue. Unconsciously I was talking to myself when I heard a loud guffaw. It was Bony Squares, lately returned from a far city to his home at Mill Pond. He was a printer who had travelled much, and could box and play ball and keep a crowd roaring on the store-steps every Saturday night. Moreover, he wore boiled shirts, and collars cut very low, and wonderful neckties of colored silk, and had a smart way with him.

"Ah, ha!" he exclaimed, "you've been a-shaving yerself!"

I smiled and blushed, and said nothing.

He dropped his walking-stick and hopped over it two or three times, and cackled, "Ha, ha! ho, ho! You're going to have a mustache, and then you're going to see a gal by the name o' Mary."

It seemed as if ruin stared me in the face.

"Lend me two dollars," Bony Squares demanded. "Come, be quick about, it or I'll tell on ye—hope t' die if I don't."

It was to me a large sum, for my income was

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only four dollars and twenty-five cents a month. But my fear of ridicule had the persuasiveness of a thumb-screw. I had two dollars and nineteen cents that I had been saving for the fair at Heartsdale. With great solemnity I took the two-dollar bill out of my pocket and put it in the hand of my oppressor.

"I'm going for a drive to-night," he said, as he took the money. "It's a matter of business that 'll pay me pretty well, and I may need some help. Come along, and I'll pay you back the money I've borrowed and a dollar besides."

"Where to?" I inquired.

"Oh, down the country about fifteen miles. I'm going to get a Bungwood cow for a friend o' mine."

"A Bungwood cow!" I exclaimed.

"An imported breed," said he, "and the best in the world. They're frisky and a little dangerous."

That seemed to me rather curious, but, then, I did not know much about cows. It was a greater compliment than I had ever received—the invitation of this imperial and heroic figure; but I concealed my joy with a look of calmness.

"When are you coming back?" I inquired.

The jaunty fellow crossed the floor, rattling his change and singing, "Oh, we won't go home

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till morning!" He turned quickly and said, with a sober face: "I'll get ye here in good season. Tell 'em you're going to stay with a friend, an' will be back in the morning."

I lied about it, for I knew that Mr. Weatherby had no high opinion of Bony Squares, and got permission to go.

At seven o'clock that evening I set out for the corner below Mill Pond, where Bony, with a horse and a buckboard, was to wait for me. There he was, and away we went; and the horse's hoofs beat time for a lively ditty sung by my new friend. The chill night fell, and a sense of sadness and regret was in me. To what place he drove, or how long it took him to get there, I know not even now. After a long time I fell asleep. A rude shake and the light of a lantern awoke me. I got out of the buggy in a shed back of a little church.

"Now for a boat-ride," said my companion; "then a short drive, and we'll be on our way home again."

"Where you going?"

"After the cow, of course."

I followed him a few rods to the shore of a great river. A man stood in a boat near by, as if waiting for us. I had never seen so much water; it sped and shimmered in the moonlight

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far from shore, and beyond was the mystery of the night. The loud voices of the river filled me with awe, and our boat creaked and swerved in roaring currents, and the boatman grew weary with his struggle, and breathed like a spent horse by and by. I knew it was the St. Lawrence, and wondered if he were going to swim the cow through its whirlpools and rapids.

We landed safely by-and-by, and followed the boatman through thick woods. There was a road just beyond them in the edge of the open. We turned into it, and a moment's walk brought us to another stage in the mystery. There, under a tree by the roadside, were a horse and wagon. For half a moment Bony stood whispering to the boatman. Then, turning quickly, he said, "Jump in—we've no time to lose."

He leaped to the seat beside me, gave the horse a cut, and we sped away on a road which he seemed to know. We drove for half an hour or so, and drew up at a large building. A lighted candle was burning in a window near the front door.

Bony got out of the wagon.

"Let me take your watch," he whispered. "I want to keep track o' the time. We haven't long to stay here."

I handed him the gold watch and chain which had belonged to my father, and which I was per-

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mitted to wear. They were to me precious above all value. I had some misgivings, but who could resist Bony Squares?

He fastened the chain upon his waistcoat, mounted the steps, rapped, and was soon admitted. Presently a big man came out of an open shed, which was part of the building, and put half a barrel and two demijohns into the wagon-box behind me. In a moment Bony came to the door and whistled.

"Come an' have a bite," he said to me.

I was chilled to the bone, and my teeth were chattering as I climbed the steps.

Crackers and cheese and a box of sardines, newly opened, lay on the counter of a store, crowded with merchandise and rank with many odors.

Bony stood eating. Now and then he took a sip of liquor from a small glass. He and the storekeeper spoke in low tones.

"Another drop 'll warm ye," said the storekeeper, as he poured more for him.

"It's as good as a hot stove," said Bony, tipping his glass.

Soon we returned to the river and recrossed it with what Bony called "the cow."

Silently, hurriedly, we put our horse in the shafts and made off on a smooth road. The

The Bungwood Cow

moon had set, and we could not see our way. Bony let the horse have his head and hurried him along. Suddenly, in the near darkness, some one shouted: "Halt! Halt!"

Bony's whip fell savagely on the back of the horse, and the latter took the first leap in a wild run. For half a minute we were in a bad mess, and knew not how we were coming out of it. Pistols roared on both sides of us, and bullets whizzed above our heads. For possibly three minutes we flew down the dark road, our front wheels leaving ground with every jump. Then suddenly it seemed as if the stars were falling on us. We had struck something. The horse went down, and we plunged headlong into the darkness. I rose unhurt, and ran around the wagon just as Bony got up with a groan. We could hear our pursuers coming.

"Follow me," my companion whispered. "We must take to the woods or go to jail. You're in it as deep as I am."

I hesitated in a sort of panic. My head was hot and more incapable than ever. One all-powerful thought moved me: Bony had my watch and chain, and was making off with them.

"Come, you —— fool—they'll shoot us down!" Bony whispered, and I followed him.

We were in the midst of a strip of woods, and

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went bumping the tree-columns on our way through it. We had come into an open field when we heard our pursuers shouting, back where the horse fell. We ran like frightened sheep, and slowed our pace beyond the top of a hill and began to walk. We tramped for an hour in silence. The sky was clearing, and we could discern the rocks and stones and fences.

"I am not going any farther," I said, stopping suddenly.

"Well, go back, then," said Bony Squares.

"You've gone and got me into a nice scrape," I declared.

"Better git sore on me—ye saphead!" said Bony, with contempt. "As if I expected to do anything but give ye a dollar an' a good time."

"I didn't have anything to do with your smuggling," I said. "If I'd known you were in that kind of business I wouldn't have been with you."

"Go on, ye cry-baby! Wasn't ye in the wagon?"

"Yes—but—"

"Well, that's enough—the goods was in the wagon, an' so was you an' so was me. All they have to do is to ketch ye with the goods. If ye didn't know what I was up to, what did ye run for?"

Between tears and perspiration I felt as if I

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were melting and running down at the top like a tallow-candle. But I held myself up manfully, and not a whimper came out of me. I had become a fugitive in spite of myself.

"Guess they wouldn't do much to us if we did go home," I said, tentatively.

"No—ye Mary chaser! They wouldn't do much more than take us up before we got a mile on the way. Then me an' you to jail, an' yer mother 'd have to pay a thousand dollars to git us out. My folks ain't got any money."

A moment of silence followed.

"If ye go an' let out on me," he went on, "I'll swear, by all that's black an' blue, that you were in the game for a part of the profits."

"Give me my watch and chain!" I demanded.

"Not unless you'll promise to stay by me till we're safe," he said.

I promised, and so the watch and chain were returned to me then and there.

I saw through the low cunning of Bony. He had drawn me into his enterprise for the sake of getting my mother's help in case of trouble.

It was growing light, and we soon came out on a smooth road, and walked along it for half a mile or so. Just before the sun rose we came to a man milking in a field by the highway.

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"Ho, ho! peaches an' cream!" said Bony, as he vaulted the fence. I followed him.

"We're lost, broke, an' starving," said he to the stranger. "Mind giving us a little fresh-laid milk?"

"No, but you'll have to take it out o' the pail," the milker answered.

"Just give me hold o' the tin," said Bony, with glad eyes. He blew back the froth and drank like a famished horse. He stopped for breath and whispered: "Peaches and cream? Yes, kind lady," and drank more. Again he rested, smiling, as he added: "Ham and eggs? Yes, if you please, with a cup o' coffee," and continued his feast. Soon he passed the pail to me, and I took a good drink. Then we went on across the field, climbed a fence, and proceeded on our way. We left the road by walking in the bed of a brook, so that no one could follow our footsteps.

"It's a big world," said Bony. "If we keep out o' the way awhile it 'll blow over and we can settle for a song, and everything 'll be all hunk. We'll pike off West, where we can go to work for big wages, and I'll show ye something o' the world."

The thought presented a great temptation, for I longed to see Niagara Falls, of which the Pearl had told me.

ADVENTURE IV

BEING THAT OF CRICKET AND THE PURPLE GHOST



WE came to broad fields, where the brook we had followed wound through many acres of wheat. It stood thick and high as my shoulders, for I was rather small of my age, and rustled in the wind.

"Here's our hotel," said Bony, as he began to wade in the brook again. "We'll find our rooms and put up for the day."

Far out in this yellowing field we climbed the bank of the stream, and on our hands and knees crawled in among the wheat-stalks.

"Ah!" said Bony Squares as he lay back in the wheat; "no ice-water, thank you. Call me at seven."

I lay down near, and soon heard him breathing heavily as he fell asleep. I looked up through the grain at a little patch of the blue sky, and thought and listened.

The great field rang with the chirp of crickets,

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that somehow set me thinking of my folly. It was a curious, beautiful country there, beneath the grain. Leaning on my elbow, I could look off under its green empyrean, supported by innumerable columns. There were little roads and trails, and a mouse came galloping up one of them. It suggested a forest of the fairies. A small bird went by me wandering in a little high-way with the leisurely pace of a hen.

I could hear a bobolink singing just above my head, and then the whir of his wings. Soon he seized a swaying stalk—one foot above another—on the very edge of my bed, and as he rocked back and forth filled the breeze with song. A bumblebee, which had fallen through the wheat-blades, rose here and there and tried to ram his way upward into the sunlight. The roar of his wings reminded me of the big side-wheeler which had passed us the night before on the river. It suggested thunder in the low, green heavens above that little world. Innumerable bearded tops, now bleaching yellow, made a sort of æolian music in the breeze. It has often seemed to me that the birds have better ears for it than we; that, indeed, the fields are full of bells and harps and fragrance and color far beyond the reach of men.

Soon I began to think of my mother. She

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was away on a visit, and would not hear of my absence for a day or two. I had nineteen cents in my pocket, and took it in my hands and counted it carefully. But I had my horrucl in a hidden pocket of my waistcoat.

Just as soon as possible I would stop somewhere and write my mother a letter, and let her know what had befallen me. I felt sure that by returning I should make her more trouble than by keeping away. She had often described to me the perils of bad company, and I had promised to be careful, but here I was up to my ears in it.

It was a mercy that sleep came to shorten that cloudless summer day. The hot sun mounted high, and for a time must have glared down straight upon us, and then descended below far wooded hills in the west; but still we slept. It was growing dusk when I was awakened by the roar of a bird's wings. Bony was on his knees within reach of my hand, looking down at me. A bird kept dipping close to the ears of my companion and snapping his wings.

Bony took a bun from his pocket, and crowded half of it into his mouth. It stuck out like a wen, and slowly diminished as he ate. He renewed his wen, saying as he did so:

"Come to supper, old man. The buns are all gone. Have some bread?"

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I was hungry, and promptly answered, "Yes."

"Plug or fine cut?" he demanded, taking crumbs of varying sizes out of his hip-pocket. "Here's bread and two pieces of turnpike cheese, and one egg on the half-shell, and three spikes."

The three spikes were dried herring, which he had taken out of his trousers-pocket.

"Aunt Maria!" he exclaimed, as he took a bite of herring; "it's like eating a jack-knife."

He spoke glibly, and spread each article on a piece of newspaper in front of us. My tongue was parched, and I went to the brook on my hands and knees, and sank my mouth in the ripples and drank greedily, as if I had been a creature of four feet. I never knew there could be so much delight in the simple act of drinking water.

I ate two herrings and half of the cheese, and all the crumbs that fell, as it were, from the rich man's table.

Suddenly we heard the whistle of a locomotive.

"There's a railroad nigh," said Bony. "Ever ride on the cars?"

"No," I answered. "Did you?"

"Pooh, hundreds o' miles!" he exclaimed, with disgust at the question. "Come on; maybe we can get that train. It was four or five miles away when it whistled."

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We hurried off in the dusk, and after walking a mile or so came to a railroad, and could see the lights of a depot near us. We mounted the wooden beams which, with straps of iron on their tops for a bearing, were the tracks of those days, and hurried to a point near the depot. There we sat down and waited in the darkness till the arrival of our train—a fearsome thing, that roared and creaked along with spark-showers and rags of flame in the air above it. The trainmen rudely shouted their commands, as if the waiting crowd were so many cattle. I trembled as I hurried with Bony to the side of the train.

“I’ve only nineteen cents,” I whispered.

“Never mind, sonny—I’ll pay yer fare,” said he, jauntily, as if such excitement and generosity were quite familiar to him.

We climbed the platform when all were aboard, and Bony said to me:

“We’ll stand here, if they don’t kick us off, until we get to the next stop.”

So we stood in the spark-shower as our train roared and creaked along, and the platform began to sway and jump and shove and jerk and waver. A young man in a gay uniform of blue and brass came out with a lantern and bawled this in my ear:

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"Look a-here, bub!—see that picture?" He held his lantern so that I could see the picture of a grave on the car door. Its headstone contained these words:

*Devoted to the memory of a man
who once stood on a car platform*

We passed into the car, and sat on a straight-backed seat by a rattling window. It was much shorter than the cars of to-day, and permeated with the odor of whale-oil that came from its lamps, and had a stove at each end. The conductor told us, when we had paid four cents a mile for our fare to the next stop, that we had just left De Kalb Junction and were on the night express for the South. A man was asleep near us with a curious framework of iron behind him. It extended from the middle of his spine to the back of his head, and had a sort of spring in it which permitted him to sit in a leaning posture.

I asked the conductor what it was.

"That," said he, "is one o' them new contrivances. Some call it a jolt-taker. It smoothes the way a little and is an aid to sleep."

In a moment Bony whispered to me: "The

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coast is clear, and I guess we'll go on a little farther, and I'll pay your fare if you'll give me your jack-knife."

I had one which had cost me ten shillings, and I gave it over. So we rode on for some two hours or more, and left the train about ten o'clock, and inquired our way of the agent, and then went on afoot. It was very dark, and Bony said that the moon would be up by-and-by, then we could find a barn or some place where we could turn in for the night. We had smooth footing, and hurried on, but no moon came to guide us. It was far past midnight when Bony halted, near some black object beside the road, and struck a match and lighted a wad of paper.

We saw, then, a ruined gate and weeds growing beyond it. I followed as my leader went in among the weeds. He lighted more paper, and we saw in the flare an old mansion with broken windows and a sagging porch. It had been long deserted, one could tell at a glance. We soon found the open doorway and entered, and Bony's matches showed us a ruined hall as large as my mother's door-yard. A broken fireplace and cracked chimney of red brick faced the door. A plough and harrow, some fallen plaster, and old iron littered the floor. A pair of sleighs, with

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a box on them, had been stored in a corner. Some straw in the bottom of the sleigh-box seemed to invite us to lie upon it, and we did so. Bony took off his coat and spread it over him—a good thing to remember if one has no better blanket—and I followed his example.

“What’s that?” I whispered, having heard a sound like that of some one stealthily crossing the floor above-stairs.

“Don’t know—I guess Adam must ‘a’ built this house.”

“Haunted, maybe,” I suggested. “Probably some one has been murdered here.”

“Shut up!” said Bony, with a shiver. “You’ll give me the megrums.”

I lay awhile listening, and went to sleep cold and hungry. I do not know how long I had slept—it was, probably, not more than half an hour—when a shrill and awful cry awoke us.

Believe me, I have heard some yelling in my day, but that cry cut like a knife. As I think of it now, it reminds me of Salvini’s wail when I saw him play the Ghost in *Hamlet*. Honestly, it made my heart tremble. That sleigh-box seemed to palpitate with terror. I rose on my elbow and looked off in the darkness. Bony covered his face and trembled. For a moment I could hear only the slow, steady beat of rain-

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drops; then stealthy footsteps and the sound of trailing garments on the floor. Again that weird, ghostly cry set my ears aching. I could feel each hair in my scalp stir and quiver. I heard again the sound of stealthy feet and of trailing garments. Then we heard the shaking of a sheet in the darkness—or that, at least, was the only sound to which one could liken it. Bony lay groaning and shivering beside me. I found a match and struck it on a side of the sleigh-box. First, I stared off in the darkness and saw nothing; then I looked down at my companion. His face appalled me; it was the mask of horror. But the glimpse he got of my own visage in the dim match-light had a worse effect upon him. He really saw a spirit then, and I saw one also, and what I saw was a fearful thing to behold—the guilty, evil spirit of Bony Squares. I could hardly resist the impulse to fly from him. With a wild cry he leaped out of the sleigh-box and stumbled toward the doorway and fled.

I lay back and covered my face with my coat. For hours I lay listening and shivering, and fearing I knew not what.

In the faint, first light of the morning I rose and peered about me. Soon I saw the silhouette of a big bird in an open window across the

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ruined hall. The light grew clearer and my vision more acute. The bird that stood on the window-sill was a peacock, with a purple body and a tail some seven feet long. As I rose it flew to the ground, with that weird shriek which had filled the darkness with terror. The mystery was explained. There were the trailing garments, the wings that rustled like a sheet when he rose to the window-sill.

This adventure served, as it were, to separate me from the goats. There was yet another thing which it accomplished: it cleared the earth of ghosts for me, so that I no longer feared them, having always a just suspicion of such fancies.

ADVENTURE V

BEING THAT OF CRICKET AND THE HAND-MADE GENTLEMAN



TOOK the road again, faint with hunger. I tell you, one will have faith in the goodness of men and women who makes a journey like that of mine. I remember it almost broke me down to go to a farm-house and face the good woman who opened the door and ask for a chance to earn my breakfast. When I spoke to her, there must have been something in my voice and countenance not to be denied or even rudely dealt with. I got all that I needed and more, and went on my way with a bundle of luncheon and a heart full of gratitude.

The sun was shining out of a clear sky behind me, and I knew that I was travelling in the right direction. The white-throated sparrow sang on a wooded slope:



Will you mar-ry me, mar-ry me, mar-ry me.

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The sidings were aglow with goldenrod and blue-bells, and the breeze had a musky breath, and every bush was a fountain of song. I posted a letter to my mother in a little hamlet through which I passed about ten o'clock.

Near noon I overtook a boy some two or three years older than myself. He had a wooden leg—a rude stump on which his knee rested—and walked with a grip in his hand. He was a rugged, serious-looking boy, with a face browned by the sunlight. He asked for my name and “place of residence.”

“I’m a commercial traveller,” he informed me, presently.

“What do you sell?”

“Sit down an’ I’ll show ye.”

We sat on the grass together, and he opened his grip. It was full of round white balls, differing in size and neatly wrapped in tinted tissue-paper.

“What is it?” I asked.

“What is it?” he answered, with dignity.

“That, sir, is Sal.”

“Sal?” said I.

“Sal,” said he, with a fond look at one of the white balls which now lay in his hand. “Sal cleans and polishes silverware, glassware, gold, brass, and pewter; removes dirt from wood-work, and makes the home bright and beautiful ”

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He spoke this lingo as if it were some passage from a book of poetry, and paused to note its effect upon me.

"What is your line?" he asked.

"I'm on my way West to find employment," said I.

"How would you like to take Sal with you?" he asked.

"I don't know," was my answer.

"I'll sell you the receipt for a dollar," said the boy with a wooden leg. "Fifty cents' worth of material will make a hundred balls. They sell like hot cakes—ten cents for the small sizes, twenty-five for the large."

"I haven't much money—only sixteen cents," I answered, with embarrassment, remembering that I had just paid three cents for postage.

He looked me over from head to foot, and said, "I'll trust ye, if ye'd like to try it."

"All right," I said.

He opened his little grip and counted out ten of the small balls and as many large ones.

"There," said he, "ye ought to be able to sell 'em all in a day. Then you can send me a dollar for the receipt."

"How do you go to work to sell it?" I asked.

"The towns are best," said he. "When I get to a town I make a little map of the main streets

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and put down the names—the hotel man is always glad to help you. By-an'-by I begin to ring the door-bells. I don't ask for the lady of the house—no, sir; I say, 'Is Mrs. Smith at home?' It works grand—there she is. 'Kind lady,' says I, 'I'm introducin' Sal, who cleans silverware, glassware, etc. Sal is better than a hired girl.'

"Don't forget to say that it makes the home bright and beautiful. It's a nice chunk o' language an' tells just what the women are trying to do. Course she says, 'No, thanks.' Then says I, 'If you've any old piece o' tarnished silver, I'd like to make a little exhibition. As the poet says:

" 'I'll make it shine
As brightly as those eyes of thine.'

Throw in a little portry once in a while. It sounds good an' is easy to remember. But ye got to be careful. Some don't like it. Women that wear aprons an' rings an' breastpins, an' have their sleeves rolled up, 'll generally stand portry, 'specially if they've got curly hair. Look out for handsome women that wear diamonds an' set around with their feet up readin' portry. Seems so them that read portry get enough of it. Don't ever give 'em any of yours.

"Women are funny. Around here there's two kinds of 'em—insiders an' outsiders. The

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outsiders talk about their neighbors; the insiders talk about their livers an' lungs, an' so on. I know one that talks about her liver shameful. You'd think it was the meanest thing in the world.

"They ain't all alike. In some places you'll find 'em perched in their fam'ly trees. Lord! I know one that sets an' chirps by the hour in her fam'ly tree. You've got to let her go it, an' bym-by, maybe, you can bring her down to the fam'ly tea-pot. If so, you're all right. It's wonderful how they go on. You'll enjoy it, an' that's half the battle.

"Be sure to notice the children. I always let 'em fool with my wooden leg. Sometimes I put one end on a chair an' let 'em set on it. I suppose this old leg has been set on an' abused more than any leg in the world.

"You ain't got a wooden leg, an' it's kind of a pity, as ye might say, for it's wonderful how this thing helps in business. Lots o' times it helps ye git acquainted, an' that gives ye a chance. Then say, look a-there." He flung his wooden stump over his knee and felt the surface of it, and explained: "That's where one kid drove a nail in it, an' that's where one fetched a whack with a stove iron, an' there a little red-headed boy bored a hole with his gimlet. Curious how

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they take to it; an' I don't mind much. Helps business an' makes 'em happy."

He called my attention to many small dents in the wood.

"That's where the dogs has bit it," he went on. "If a dog comes at me, I always put it out to him. It keeps 'em busy."

He showed me a small atomizer, adding, "A little ammonia 'll shift the trouble onto them."

We rose and resumed our journey. I had stored my small stock of Sal in my coat-pockets.

"There's the receipt," said he, gravely, as he handed me a piece of paper.

It revealed the fact that Sal was chiefly composed of whiting and ammonia.

"All ye need now is a small sponge an' some tissue-paper, an' here's a piece o' chamois that ye can have an' welcome."

He explained his method of applying the Sal, and presently handed me his card, on which I read this legend:

JAMES HENRY McCARTHY

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

HERMON CENTRE, N. Y.

"I ain't much there," he went on. "The boys call me Pegleg at home, an' that's one reason I

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got out. I wish you'd call me Mr. McCarthy, please. I intend to be a gentleman, an' try to be. Can you tell me what a gentleman is?"

I looked thoughtful and said nothing. Mr. McCarthy continued:

"He's a man that don't git drunk or swear or pare his nails in public, an' always takes off his hat to a lady. He washes his hands before he goes to the table, an' eats kind o' slow an' deliberate, an' maybe smokes a fine cigar after dinner, 'an always does as he'd like to be done by. That's why I'm tryin' to help you along."

I expressed my gratitude in no half-hearted way.

"I like you, dinged if I don't," said Mr. McCarthy, with a kindly patronage. "You'll git along all right—don't worry."

After a moment of silence, he went on:

"Ye see, I'm careful about all these things. I keep my eyes an' ears open, an' I'm teachin' myself. I'm a kind of a hand-made gentleman, an' that's the most durable kind. But I ain't finished myself yet. You wait; I'll show ye something one o' these days. How do you happen to be on the road?"

I told him my story.

"Don't worry," he went on. "Mr. James

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Henry McCarthy will see you through. I try to be benevolent."

We walked on a little way in silence.

"I suppose you've noticed that I can sling some rather big words," he remarked, presently. "Well, I always carry a pocket dictionary, an' when I hear a word I like I look it up an' chalk it down in my note-book; helps my conversation. I study it a good deal while I'm travelling. Ye see, I never had a chance to go to school much—just learnt how to read an' write an' cipher a little. My knowledge ain't very superior. Now, that's quite a word—superior. How does it sound?"

"All right," I answered.

"Never used it before—found it in the book to-day. I've got about forty dollars saved, an' I've learnt thirty new words so 't I can use 'em. When I go home by-an'-by they've got to look up to me."

The oddness of it all was not lost upon me, young as I was. I think often of the frankness of that young son of America, just beginning to feel his way upward from the plane of lowly poverty and of his kindly heart. I dreamed not then of what he was to do in the world.

"Come into this house with me," said Mr. McCarthy. "I'll give ye an exposition—ahem!

Cricket and the Hand-Made Gentleman

that's one o' my new ones. Pretty fair kind of a farm-house. Wouldn't wonder if there was some old silver in it."

He led me to the front door of a big, square, old country mansion. A maid opened the door and asked to know our business. Mr. McCarthy removed his hat and bowed.

"Will you please communicate with the lady of the house," said he, "an' tell her that I am selling Sal? Kindly inform her that Sal cleans silverware, glassware, gold, brass, and pewter; removes dirt from woodwork, and makes the home bright and beautiful. If you've any old silver I'd like to show ye what it 'll do."

The maid brought him a tarnished tea-pot, and McCarthy went to work and soon made it glow like a drop of dew in the sunlight. The maid took it to her mistress, and returned presently with fifty cents to be invested in Sal.

"I just wanted to show ye what Sal can do," said Mr. McCarthy, as we went away. "Ye got to believe what ye say or ye can't sell anything. Make yourself believe in it, an' you'll succeed."

We came presently to four corners in the road, where my new friend bade me sit down with him. He consulted his note-book.

"Here," said he, "are Jehoshaphat Corners. The straight road goes to Canaan, Waterville,

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and Van Kleek's Huddle; the left to Putney, Porridgeville, and Lawrence. You take one road an' I'll take the other, an' four weeks from now we could meet an' settle up at Graham's Hotel in Buffalo. It's only a dollar a day there. Here, I'll lend ye fifty cents; it 'll help some till ye get a-going."

"You're very kind, and I thank you for it."

"Don't mention it," said he. "It's no more than any gentleman would do."

So we parted there, and I took the straight road and he turned to the left.

ADVENTURE VI

IN WHICH CRICKET HAS SUNDRY EXPERIENCES



WAS lonely at leaving Mr. McCarthy, but full of hope. At Canaan I went to work and sold about half my stock of goods and took the cars to Waterville. There I bought a small hand-bag and a stock of ingredients for my receipt, and had just left my hotel next morning to begin my canvass when a trumpet sounded up the main street of the little city. Turning, I saw a caravan of great red wagons coming toward me at a swift pace, led by four beautiful white horses. A smart-looking lady and gentleman occupied the high seat of the first van, and he was driving the white horses.

"A circus!" I heard people exclaim near me, and every foot halted and all eyes were bent on the red vans. They were fast approaching. The driver referred to wore a white beaver hat and a coat of blue velvet with a white flower in

The Hand-Made Gentleman

its buttonhole. The lady beside him was a wonderful creature with a great hat and fluttering ribbons and gleaming jewels, and a face more beautiful, as I thought, than any my poor eyes had seen. Three glowing vans had gone by, each with its team of handsome horses, and each van ornately lettered as follows:

JAMES FISK'S TRAVELLING EMPORIUM.
DRY GOODS AND YANKEE NOTIONS

A white banner on the first and third vans announced:

OUR GREAT STORE WILL BE OPEN FROM TWO TO
SIX TO-DAY IN THE VACANT LOT CORNER
OF CROSBY AND MAIN STREETS

I began my work, and for an hour or so the vans were passing up and down the streets, and most of the women I saw left me to go and look out of their doors and windows. I could make little headway, for by two o'clock the houses were all empty. Mothers, daughters, and hired girls were on their way to the great travelling store. I went with the crowd, and found the red vans in a row on the vacant lot and many gathered about them. The sides of each van had been let down to serve as counters on which

Cricket Has Sundry Experiences

the goods were displayed. The smart-looking man who had driven the white horses sat under a little canopy of red-and-white bunting with the wonderful lady who had ridden beside him. I stood with a score of other people looking at them.

"What! do you think I would lie for a shilling?" he was saying to a man who stood beside him. "Bosh! I might tell eight lies for a dollar, but one for a shilling! No! That's below my price."

He laid off his beaver hat and sat twisting his sandy-hued mustache. His curly hair was cut close.

"Hey, boy!" he said, as he beckoned to me, "want to earn half a dollar?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, trot down to the depot and bring me a copy of last night's *Utica Observer*," he commanded, as he put a shinplaster in my hand.

When I had returned with the paper, he asked, "What ye got in yer grip?"

"Sal," I answered.

"Sal!" he exclaimed, with a laugh, "who's Sal?"

"A wonder!" I answered. "Cleans and polishes glassware, silverware, gold, brass, and pewter; removes dirt from woodwork, and makes the home bright and beautiful."

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He laughed again, and asked me to show him what Sal could do on the large silver buckles which adorned his shoes. This I did, and the result so pleased him that he offered me a dollar for the balance of my stock, and I gladly closed the deal.

It was about three o'clock when I set out afoot for the Huddle. About half-way there I found a puppy in the road—a small, lonely, pathetic creature, abandoned by some one who had had enough of him. I wonder if ever I felt such an appeal as came out of that warm little bundle of playfulness, wrapped in the softest robe of silken fur and with eyes saying, "Please, sir, take me and be kind to me."

The puppy followed me until I yielded to his pleading and took him up in my arms. Well, he was better than no company, and I buttoned him under my coat and against my breast, where he lay asleep with only his nose in view. At dusk I found lodgings in a farm-house, and went to my room contented with the bit of luncheon that I had with me. A kindly old woman had said that I could stay, and sent a hired man up-stairs with me. He explained that "the boss and his wife" were away, and would not return for an hour or so. I offered to pay him if he would take care of the puppy, but he had to hurry to

Cricket Has Sundry Experiences

meet a train, and said that he would come up and get him later.

I decided to make some Sal, and so I put the ingredients in my wash-bowl and added water. It became an obstinate, ill-looking mess, and one might as well have tried to make balls out of buttermilk. It resisted all my efforts. I wondered what I should do with it, and lay down upon the bed in discouragement. The hired man had not yet returned, and the puppy had gone to sleep in a corner. I would lie there and rest while I waited, and so, thinking, fell asleep.

Some hours later the puppy woke me with loud cries of despair. The hired man must have forgotten his promise. I rose from the bed, and saw the plight of my puppy. He had wallowed in my basin, and the soft Sal lay thick on his body. He began wailing as if wild with all regret. I could hear people jumping out of bed.

In a moment I heard a rap at my door, and opened it. A man, half dressed, sprang aside as the puppy ran upon his bare feet. Farther down the gloomy hall I could hear him calling and pursuing my pet; then a soft thud on the floor. The man had picked up the puppy and dropped him, saying, "Heavens!" It was only one word, but full of meaning.

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I tried to clean the floor while my benefactors pursued the unhappy creature.

"Pick him up!" said a woman, excitedly.

"Pick him up! Never!" said the man.

"Seems so he was covered with lather," said the woman.

"Maybe he's mad!" another suggested.

"Throw this sheet over him!"

"Come on, I've got him now," said the first woman.

Soon there came a loud rap at my door. A tall, thin, long-nosed Yankee entered as I opened it.

"See here, young man," he drawled, "what do you mean by fillin' this house with puppies?"

"There is only one, sir," I answered.

"Only one!" said he, sharply. "I should think that was enough. He's as big as an elephant. He filled the house from cellar to garret, and crowded us all out o' bed and yelled for more room. Say, what's he got on him?"

"Silver polish," I answered.

"Silver polish!" said he. "Well, I've read o' their puttin' dogs in a bath-tub, but I never heard o' their bein' polished before."

"He got into the basin where I mixed it."

My visitor picked up the dish of soft Sal, and held it near the light for examination.

Cricket Has Sundry Experiences

"Godfrey Cordial!" he remarked, "it's an awful-lookin' mess! What do you call it?"

"Sal," I answered.

"Sal!" he exclaimed. "I'm sorry that you an' Sal ever lit in my family tree. You're a fine pair o' birds."

I explained to him that the hired man had promised to take the puppy out-of-doors, but had forgotten to do so, and he left me.

I went to breakfast soon after daylight in the morning. When I returned to my room the Sal was gone. Some one had carried the bowl away with its contents. I went below to look for the proprietor. I found him shovelling dirt in the garden.

"Somebody took my polish," I said to him, as pleasantly as possible.

"Yes, an' I'm about to bury it an' the dog, too."

"Is the dog dead?" I asked, with a pang of regret.

"Yes; slain by his own deviltry! Oh, he had a busy night! Got to playin' with our ol' cat; he polished her an' she polished him. Her paws are all gummed up an' her eyes swelled an' kind o' shiny. He got at our shepherd dog an' polished him. That dog has got a sore mouth an' is brighter than he ever was before. The

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last performance of your puppy was to tackle one o' the hind feet o' my ol' mare; he didn't live long after that. The services have begun, an' I guess you're the only mourner. I've just prayed that I may never see him again. The sermon will be short. Don't ever take up any more room in the world than what you're entitled to."

So ended my first adventure in business. It taught me the wisdom of knowing how, and of being sure about it, and, further, that one is to be careful not to take more than his share of room in the world.

ADVENTURE VII

WHICH IS THAT OF CRICKET AND THE LOVER AND
THE POTATO-SACK



THE farmer in whose house I had spent the night was a thrifty man of the name of Ephraim Baker. My hope in Sal having been overthrown, I offered him my services. I had had enough of disappointment and uncertainty.

"You don't look stout," said he, "but you ought to be able to mow away an' rake after."

Well, I made a bargain with him, and went to work at once. My first task was to lead a great bull to water. He stood in the stable with a ring in his nose, and roared as I took him out. It was like leading a thunder-storm, but I thought of what General Washington would have done, and walked without flinching. I was surprised to see how easily I could handle the big bull with that ring in his nose. After this initiation the harvesters—big, cordy fellows—tried to bury

The Hand-Made Gentleman

me in the mow. They always did that with a fresh hand, "to see what he was made of." Well, I kept my head and shoulders above the grain, although they had given me a fork with three corners on the stale. It was a hard pace they set me, and I lay down at night like a wounded soldier.

I slept with the hired man, who had taken me to my room when I arrived, with all my pride upon me. He was a big, friendly fellow with bristling red hair, who bore the proud, sonorous name of Sam. He had forgotten to remove the puppy—so he said—and thought it all an excellent joke.

He indulged in autobiography as I lay yawning—led me through his career to romantic scenes where he first met his girl and "took a shine to her."

"I wished," said he, after a moment of silence, "that you'd write a letter for me which I could copy and send to her. I want it worded right up to the mark. You've got learnin', an' will know how to write a good, respectable, high-toned letter."

I agreed to do my best for him.

Mr. Baker called us at four, and we dressed and went into the garden and dug potatoes until breakfast-time. So each day began, its work

Cricket, the Lover, and the Potato-Sack

continuing in field, mow, and milking-yard until dark.

Next evening, when we went to our room, with pen and ink I sat down to write the letter for him.

"To Miss Fannie Comstock, Summerville, New York," he dictated, in a whisper. "Dear Miss."

He sat a moment thinking.

"Tell her I ain't forgot her," he went on, "and that I am well an' hope you're the same, an' so on an' so forth."

So I began the letter as follows:

DEAR MISS,—It is only a month since we parted, but it has been the longest month in my life, and although I am far away it will surprise you to learn that I see you often. I see you in the fields every day and in my dreams every night.

"I don't think that will do," he demurred, soberly, when I read it to him.

"Why not?" was my query.

"Well, it don't seem as if it was exactly proper an' good sense," he continued, in all seriousness. "The month ain't had any more 'n thirty-one days in it—that's sure."

I tried again with better understanding, and this came of it:

DEAR MISS,—I write these lines to let you know that I am well and that I haven't forgotten you. I hope

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that you are well and that you haven't forgotten me. I am working on a farm, and am as happy as could be expected.

"That's good," said he, when I read it to him; and added, proudly, with his finger on the unfinished line, "Wages, thirty dollars a month."

I did as he wished.

"Now go on," he suggested. "Throw in a big word once in a while."

"Aren't you going to say anything about love?" I asked. "A little poem might please her."

"Go light on that," he answered, doubtfully. "She's respectable."

It is a trait of the common clay of which Sam was made to consider love a thing to be reluctantly, if ever, confessed. When the grand passion showed itself in his conduct it was greeted with jeers and rude laughter. It became, therefore, a hidden, timid thing.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed; "she can't be more respectable than love and poetry. If you love her you ought not to be ashamed of it."

"Well, throw in a little if you think best," he yielded, "but do it careful."

So the letter continued:

Lately I've been saving my money. Perhaps you can guess why. I want a home and some one to help me

Cricket, the Lover, and the Potato-Sack

make it happy, and I believe I've found her. She is good and beautiful, and all that a woman should be. Do you want to know who it is? Well, that's a secret. She's a lady, and that's all I will tell you now. Fannie, you're a friend of mine, and I need your advice. I am a little frightened and don't know just what to say to her, and you could make it easy for me if you would. Please let me know when I can see you.

Sam shook his head and laughed and exclaimed, "That's business!"

"No, it's love," I objected.

"Well, it ain't foolish or improper, an' it sounds kind o' comical. She'll want to know all about it. Put in that I'm goin' to take a farm an' be my own boss, an' have as good a horse an' buggy as any one. That makes it kind o' temptin'."

I did as he wished.

"Now say, 'Yours truly, with respect,'" said he, and so my task was ended.

Three days later he came to me in high spirits, with a letter in his hand.

"I'm goin' to see Fannie to-morrow," he said, in a whisper. "If Sam Whittemore can do anything for you, I want to know it."

His opportunity came that evening. I was doing my chores in the barn. Suddenly Sam burst upon me.

The Hand-Made Gentleman

"They're after you!" he whispered.

"Who?" I asked.

"Two men in a buggy—they've heard you were here."

I had told him of my trouble, and now it threatened to engulf me. Would I give myself up and go home with the officers? I could not bear the thought of going home like a felon. It would kill my mother. This all flashed through my brain in a jiffy, while the dusk air seemed to be full of chains and handcuffs. I started to climb a ladder.

"No use," said he, as he picked up an empty sack. "They know you're here. Get into this sack."

A wagon stood on the barn floor loaded with potatoes, in big sacks. Sam was holding the empty sack. I stepped into it and sat with my chin between my knees while he stuffed a bundle of straw all around me. Then he cut two holes near the top of the sack, to give me air and an outlook, tied it above my head, and flung me on the load of potatoes. It was all done in the shake of a lamb's tail, as they used to say.

"The old man is going to drive to Sackett's Harbor to-night with these potatoes," he whispered. "You go on to Summerville; I'll meet you there to-morrow."

Cricket, the Lover, and the Potato-Sack

Then he left me, and I lay quietly on the load.

"He isn't in there," I heard him say, on his way to the house.

Well, they did some searching and tramping about for the next half-hour or so. By-and-by they put the team on the wagon-pole, and we began our journey—the potatoes and I. They nudged me while the wagon rattled over stones in the stable-yard, as if they wished me to move along; but we came soon to smoother going. Darkness had fallen, and through the peep-holes in my sack I could see moonlight and a small section of the Milky Way. My discomfort set me to work planning relief. I drew the new jack-knife, which I had bought in my one day of plenty, and cut two long slits in the bottom of the sack and gave my feet their freedom. With my legs protruding a sense of the dearness of life returned to me. Two more slits in the sack enabled me to put my arms out and to move freely on the load. I lay quietly for an hour or so, and then thought I would try sitting up. So I rose and adjusted my peep-holes and stared about me. My employer sat on one end of the seat, singing. Soon I could hear only the creak of the whiffletrees and the rattle of the wheels. The reins, which were looped over a shoulder, fell limp, and he began to snore.

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I could hear the distant roar of a railroad train. It was coming nearer, and where was the crossing? A sense of prudence caused me to climb to the seat and take the reins. I did this gently, and without waking him. I had a fear of falling in with more officers, and kept my sack on me and listened for teams. If I should hear one coming I would resume my place on the load, and draw in my legs and arms like a turtle. Completely taken up with my plans and perils, it never occurred to me that I was one of the most uncanny creatures that ever went abroad in the night. Suddenly I heard a swift movement beside me, and turned my head. My companion had awakened, and was crowding as far away as possible, his mouth and eyes wide open.

He gave a great gasp, and, before I could find words to calm him, shouted: "Land! What's this?" and leaped from the wagon. It was a wonder—the swiftness of him.

"Don't be afraid!" I called, as I checked the horses. "It's I—Cricket Heron. I got away in a potato-sack and came on the load."

He stood a moment looking up at me, and gasping for breath. "Cricket Heron!" he exclaimed, presently, and stood gazing up at me in

Cricket, the Lover, and the Potato-Sack

silence for half a moment, and supporting himself on a front wheel.

"Say, boy," said he, in a voice that betrayed his agitation, "excuse me, but you'll have to find other company. You've wore me out."

He paused half a moment for breath, and went on:

"When a sack o' potatoes sets down beside ye an' opens conversation, it's a little more than I can stan'." He resumed his seat and took a look at me, and added, with a laugh, "You'd scare the devil."

In a few words I told my story, and he seemed to believe and to pity me. He put a few queries, and I answered freely.

"You better go home an' tell the truth about it," he said, as he hurried the horses. "The only thing I don't like about you is your runnin' away. God hates a coward, an' He don't seem to care if a coward suffers. Take that thing off. Be a man; don't be a sack o' potatoes. You'd cheat the man that bought ye for two bushels o' potatoes. They're worth more than a coward."

He untied the string above my head, and I took off the sack. The lights of the village were just ahead. He drove to a store whose proprietor was awaiting him. There he paid me the sum

The Hand-Made Gentleman

of six dollars for my work, and I left him and went to a small inn.

So ended the adventure of the potato-sack. It taught me that a man is never so good as the thing he tries to be, whether it is a hero or a sack of potatoes.

ADVENTURE VIII

IN WHICH CRICKET MEETS THE COLONEL AND
THE YOUNG MISS



LAY until after midnight groping in the mine of thought which Mr. Baker had laid open. It was a new kind of exercise, and, for one thing, after digging in my conceit awhile, I found a brain. It was not a large find, but there are some, surely, who go through life without as good luck. It was the most impudent brain I ever knew.

"You're a fool and a coward," it seemed to say to me. "What are you going to do?"

"Look for employment," I suggested.

"That's what I'm doing, and you're the only one in the world who can give it. Try me."

And I did—thought it all over, and began to make rules for the regulation of my conduct. Thereafter I would be brave; no more skulking for me.

I was up at daybreak with a new tone in my

The Hand-Made Gentleman

voice. That morning I spent half of my money for a new flannel shirt and some fresh underwear. I felt very brave and careless when I started for Summerville with the village behind me. It was a walk of seven miles, and nothing happened except Sam, who had driven over in a buggy and come down the road to meet me. He was dressed up, and had a dreamy eye and a red face.

"What luck?" I queried.

"Ain't seen her yet," he said. "Get in here. I'm so scairt I'm all of a tremble. You got through all right?"

"Yes."

"So the old man said. Thought he'd die laughin' 'bout the potato-sack."

"He cured me of being a coward."

"Wish he could cure me," said Sam Whittemore. "I ain't afraid o' man or beast, or anything but a woman."

"Women won't hurt you," I argued.

"No, but they can make ye awful 'shamed."

It seemed very curious—the timidity of this big, powerful man. I had seen him handle a ton of wheat in five minutes.

"They all look dangerous to me," he added. Then he sighed and exclaimed, "Heavens to Betsey!"

"Isn't Fannie willing to marry you?" I asked.

Cricket, the Colonel, and the Young Miss

"Looks that way, but maybe she's only fool-in'." He shook his head nervously, and added: "If she was you'd see me light out. I wouldn't stop runnin' this side o' Californy."

"Don't be afraid," was my ready counsel. "She wants to marry you or she wouldn't have asked you to come."

As if inspired with new courage, he drew up the reins and touched his horse with the whip.

"I'll ask her if it kills me," he said, his brow wrinkling with determination.

Neither spoke until we entered the little village of Summerville. He left me at the hotel, where I was to wait for him.

"Goin' up to see her," he said, in low, half-whispered tones. "I'll ask her to take a ride with me. Oh, I forgot! A letter come for you this mornin'; here it is. An', say, one o' them men that come last night said that he was a friend o' yours."

"A friend of mine!"

"Yes, but I didn't believe him. I guess he was tryin' to fox me."

I opened the letter as he drove away and read as follows:

MY DEAR SON,—I believe all you say, and am very sorry for you. It is a grief and a wonder to me that

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you didn't turn back and let him go his own way when you saw that he was a law-breaker. You wouldn't have missed the watch as much as you miss me and your self-respect. You remember what I said to you about taking up with people you don't know. Since you have chosen not to follow my counsel, I presume you have found your own better than mine. If that is true, I shall need your advice, and will rely upon you to guide me in every time of difficulty. You have strong hands and have learned how to use them. You have many friends and a mother who will do anything she can for you. But we must reap as we sow. You should retrace your own steps in the wrong road and find your way back. God help you! Come as soon as you can and tell the truth, and be not afraid. Truth will beat all the lawyers. If you should be sick let me know, and I will come to you. Tell me where to send clothing for your comfort. I send a little money and much love.

That letter was a godsend. I was inclined to agree with Sam that women can make one "awful 'shamed." My young manhood really began that day. I put the money, which would have paid my fare to Heartsdale, in my stocking, and determined not to use it. I would find my own way back to her.

An hour or so later Sam returned with a cheerful look.

"We're goin' to be married," he whispered, as he almost broke my hand.

"When?"

Cricket, the Colonel, and the Young Miss

"Next week, Monday, an' we're goin' to Niagara Falls. It's a big excursion, an' costs only a dollar an' sixty cents."

Niagara Falls! The great water-hammers!

"I wish I could go with you," I suggested.

"Come on," said he; "we'll have a grand time. But you must go to the weddin'—you'll kind o' steady me."

I was thrilled by what lay before me, for now I should see the Falls and the fleet horses.

"If I can earn my board, I'll stay where I am until Monday," I said.

"Wait a minute," said he. "I'm goin' to see the landlord. He's an old friend o' mine."

Well, within five minutes Sam got a job for me. I was to look after the billiard-tables, and to receive my board for my labor until we went away, and went to work at once.

That evening an elderly man of distinguished appearance sat in the billiard-room.

"Who are you, my boy?" he asked.

I told him my name and where I lived, and that I was going to the Falls, Monday, and working for my board meanwhile.

"Ah, ha!" said he, stroking his white mustache and imperial, "so you're from the land of Silas Wright?"

"Yes, sir."

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He asked about certain good people that he had known in my county, and then said: "This is no kind of work for you to be doing. Pack your grip and come home with me. You may share my room, and stay as long as you like."

Well, the end of it was that I went home with Colonel Busby—that being his name—soldier, orator, philosopher. He and his daughter—a girl of about my age—were alone in the house with one servant.

"Jo," said he to the girl, as we entered, "this is a high-stepper from St. Lawrence County, and a friend of mine. His name is Cricket Heron."

The girl gave me her hand, and said, laughingly, that her name was Josephine. She was tall and slender, and I remember thinking that she had almost a woman's look in her dark eyes.

After supper the Colonel said he was going over town and would return presently.

His daughter made me feel at home, and had pretty manners, and a sweet, girlish way of talking, and that charm of youth which has no suspicion of its riches.

First of all, I think of her mouth—perfect in its curves and color. Out of it came joy and

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careless words set in wonderful music. What a voice! Upon my honor, sometimes it was like a scale played on the flute. We all know the music—that ringing of the golden bowl of youth when Pleasure touches it, and know, too, how soon the bowl is broken. She sang and played upon the guitar, and talked, and this, above all, I remember: she seemed unconscious of herself and of her power over my foolish heart. We compared our knowledge of poetry and romance, our aims and ideals, our tastes and pleasures.

But the Colonel came not, although the clock had struck eleven. She suggested that I might wish to retire. It was a thought of her, and not of myself, that led me to rise and say that I was ready. She lighted a candle and showed me to my room. I went to bed thinking that, after all, my Mary was not her equal.

An hour or so later the Colonel's voice awoke me. He was calling my name in a loud, imperative tone, and tramping about the house as if in search of me. I lay still, not knowing what to do. Soon the Colonel entered my room with a candle in his hand.

"Heron, you rascal, get out of this room!" said he, loudly. "Didn't I say you were to sleep with me?"

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Before I could answer he had gathered up my shoes and stockings and flung them into the hall. He took my clothing under his arm while I got out of bed.

"Forward, march!" he commanded, and I followed through the dusky halls to his bedroom in silence. I observed that he walked unsteadily, and I knew the nature of his affliction and felt some fear of him.

"Heron," said he, with great frankness, "I want company—I need you right here."

He sang loudly, as I helped him to draw his boots:

"'Tis the last rose of summer left blooming alone.'"

In a moment he rose and seized me by the shoulders and crowded me against the wall, by way of demonstrating his strength.

"You are iron, boy, but I am steel," he said, between his teeth, as he lightly thumped my head upon the figured paper. I made no answer.

The severe look in his face turned to smiles in half a moment. He showed me his wounds—a saber slash on his head, and a number of scars cut by bullets and flying fragments of shell. He asked me to feel his biceps, and I did so, not

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wishing to be impolite. Before I could step aside he had my head in chancery, and was making a new demonstration. The candle was knocked to the floor, and I struggled with Colonel Busby in the darkness, feeling a dreadful uncertainty of his plans. Soon he had pushed me into a corner, where I stood clinging to his waist.

"Unhand me, villain!" he commanded, and we released each other and I relighted the candle.

The Colonel took off his tie and collar, and as he did so whispered gruffly, and with a playful wagging of his head:

"How ill that taper burns! Ha! who comes there? Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh. My blood grows chilly, and I freeze with horror.'"

I saw that it was all a kind of harmless frolic, and soon he proposed that we "knit up the ravelled sleeve of care."

We got into bed, and fortunately the Colonel soon fell asleep. I had rather a bad night of it, for he snored and muttered, and was, on the whole, an irksome creature. In the morning he said little, and sat with a look of sadness. He went into the garden after breakfast, and Jo said to me:

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"I'm sorry my father disturbed you. I didn't think he would do it."

"Oh, that's nothing," I assured her, bravely. "I hope it doesn't worry you."

But I could see that my words had not relieved her unhappiness.

She went to school, and I spent the day writing letters—one to my mother and one to Mr. McCarthy, in both of which I set down much that I have tried to tell you. Then I composed a verse and engrossed it with great care. For such folly—praise God—I had always a keen relish.

Again that evening the Colonel left us, and I helped the pretty girl with her lessons, and we had two more wistful hours, the like of which one remembers with thankfulness and a sad smile. Where should I look to match them? Surely not in my own life, long as it has been. She sighed when I spoke of leaving, and a little tremble in her lips said so much to me—things rich with meaning and mystery.

"I'll have to help in the kitchen next week," said she, with an air of responsibility. "Fannie, our cook, is to be married."

"Her name is Comstock?"

"Yes."

"I know all about it—Sam told me."

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"Sam!" she exclaimed, with a look of contempt. "He kept her waiting three years because he hadn't the courage to propose."

Then I told her of my adventures, and how they led to Sam, and how Sam had straightway led me to her, or, at least, so near that we could not help meeting. I told her of our life at Baker's, but said not a word of the letter—that seemed to me a sacred confidence. However, I did tell of Sam's fear when he reached Summer-ville. She thought it very foolish of him.

"I should think that would be the best part of it—asking her to marry him and telling about his love," said she, turning serious and feeling her beads.

"What kind of a man would you prefer?" I bravely inquired.

"Let me see," she said, leaning her chin upon her hands in a thoughtful and pretty pose. "Of course, he must be good, and he really *must* be handsome and tall and strong and brave, and I want him to be a great man; and I am studying very, very hard so that I can help him to be great."

I sat in silence for a little time, full of sad thoughts. I was neither handsome nor tall nor brave, but sometimes I had thought myself exceedingly good. As to becoming great, that

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was another respect in which I felt strong and confident.

I was undersized—yes, a little undersized. I would grow some, however—possibly to six feet; who could tell? But—my face—there was no dodging that. It was plain, very plain, I could see that myself, and my hair did not curl and was too light, and my beard was not yet born.

Jo interrupted my thoughts. She began to clap her hands in a sudden outburst of enthusiasm.

“I have a grand idea!” she said. “We’ll give Fannie a little wedding here if father will let us. I think it would be great fun.”

For half an hour or so we sat, making plans for the wedding. Before going to bed, in the Colonel’s room, I gave her my horruck—an act of great generosity. I promised to tell her all about it if she could solve the riddle, and she said that she would try.

I went to bed, and the Colonel returned shortly, very bad. I had drawn his boots and remarked that he looked weary, when suddenly he rose and picked up a foil and began to thrust and parry with a hand raised behind him.

“Ah, you insult me, sir!” he hissed, as he danced on tiptoes in the attitude of a fencer,

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and drove me across the room. He stopped suddenly, his point on the floor, in a haughty pose, and demanded, "Will you have a blade, sir, and a bout with me?"

"I do not know how to fence," I said.

"Ah—then you are forgiven," said he, with a loving smile and a jaunty swing of his head. "But, mind you—mind you, I cannot brook an insult."

Before the light was extinguished he sent his voice roaring through the still house in two lines of *The Last Rose of Summer*.

We got into bed, and as soon as I could decently do it I feigned sleep, to avoid conversation.

I lay thinking for hours after the Colonel had gone to sleep—hours, indeed, of fearful expectation. It was awful to room with a man like Colonel Busby, but, after all, it was a good schooling in bravery, and the time had come when I must be brave. I longed for perils, and for even a wound or two. If there should be a war I would enlist, if possible, and show her how brave I could be. Perhaps, if I became very brave and good and strong and great, she would forgive my lack of size and beauty.

In the midst of these reflections my companion lay groaning with nightmare, and this

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further thought came to me that, hard as it was to be his friend, it would be still more terrible to be Colonel Busby himself.

To such a hopeful state of mind my last adventure had brought me.

ADVENTURE IX

WHICH DESCRIBES THE COERCION OF SAM AND HIS
WEDDING JOURNEY



O went the days and nights with us there in the home of Colonel Busby, and I am nearly through with them.

One morning Jo said to me: "I'm sorry that father behaved so last night. It's dreadful. Did he hurt you?"

"Not a bit," was my answer.

"You are as brave as you can be," she went on, with a look of shame and sorrow. "It worries me terribly. Oh, dear! I wouldn't marry a man who drinks for all the money in the world."

"You'd need it to repair the furniture," I suggested, full of a great joy that she thought me brave.

Her eyes filled with tears, and I remember well the tender dignity with which I took her hand and tried to comfort her. It was a pretty

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picture, upon my word—the boy and the maiden, and both so clean-hearted.

Well, now, as to Sam and the wedding. We invited a number of Fannie's friends, who were servants in the neighborhood, and made a monster cake and some ice-cream. Sam arrived early, red and uncomfortable, and looking very new in a fresh suit of clothes. His voice, even, was afraid to show itself, as one might say. He held it down near a whisper and had a watchful eye.

Jo and a few of her school-girl friends had decorated the parlor, and spread a table in the dining-room with refreshments. Now they stood looking at Sam.

His eyes filled with alarm as we laid our plans before him.

"I ain't broke to this kind o' thing," he said, "an' I'm scairt clear through. Maybe it could be put off until I'm nerved up a little."

"No, indeed," said Jo, as she locked the door and faced about with a saucy look in her eyes. "You've simply got to be married at ten o'clock. You might as well make up your mind to it first as last. You've kept Fannie waiting for three years, and now you're going to be married."

Poor Sam shook his head and smiled, and looked rather foolish and unhappy.

Sam and His Wedding Journey

"You needn't be afraid," Jo went on. "We're not going to hurt you. We're just going to marry you, and I should think you'd be very happy. Fannie is a good girl, and a sweet-looking girl, too, and she'll be a help to you."

It was as good as a play to hear her talk to him. Sam had an anxious look, and was, in a way, like one condemned.

"I'd like," said he, with just a little emphasis on the like—"I'd like to go over to the village a minute."

"I'm sorry, but there isn't time," Jo answered. She was gentle but firm.

"I'm no coward," he said, in a voice that trembled a little, "but—I ain't used to women."

"Poor thing!" said Jo, with just a touch of contempt for him. "You've got to get used to them, and I'll give you the first lesson. Stand where you are."

Fannie, a comely, red-cheeked girl of about his age, had entered the room. Jo took her arm and led her up to Sam.

"Now give him a good kiss," the little wretch commanded.

Fannie gave him a kiss, but he stood unmoved save that his face grew redder.

"Oh, it's not fair to take a kiss without returning it. That's cheating," Jo protested.

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He kissed her, but with such a sober countenance! It suggested retaliation.

"Brave Sam!—you're learning," Jo said to him. She put her pretty hand in his, and added, soothingly: "Be brave, Sam; be brave and cheer up; nobody will hurt you. When the minister comes you will stand here, and Fannie will stand beside you—like that. Please keep your hands down at your side—so—and remember you must pay attention to the minister."

Poor, old, good-hearted Sam! It was like biting a horse, and he needed it.

Well, he played his part rather poorly, but the wedding was successful in its main purpose, and Sam hurried away to bring his horse and buggy. He ran as he left the door-yard, like one escaping.

Jo beckoned to me, and I went with her into the sitting-room, where for a moment we stood alone. How short it was, and yet how long it has been—that little moment!

"May I kiss you once?" I asked, timidly.

She made no reply, but she let me kiss her. Dear girl! We were so young and innocent, and all these years were ahead of us, and—excuse me—I must change the subject.

The excursion train that was to take us to the Falls left our depot at one o'clock. We were

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among the first who got aboard, and the cars filled rapidly with men and women and crying babies and boys and girls. Ephraim Baker and his wife had a seat near us. Venders passed up and down the aisle with papers, lemonade, "pop-corn just about salt enough," apples, and a curious, horn-shaped fruit called bananas, the "peth" of which was declared to be "very tasty."

We reached Syracuse in the evening, and changed to the night express bound for Buffalo. An attraction of the trip, which had been much advertised, was a chance to see one of the new sleeping-cars on the Central, and an engine burning coal instead of wood. About eight o'clock, while we were waiting on a side-track, the conductor invited us to pass through the train and take a look at the new sleeping-car. We filed slowly through it—a car glowing with varnish and highly decorated panels, and divided into four sections by curtains of heavy cloth. Each section had a lower, middle, and upper berth.

Late at night, as I sat half asleep leaning on Sam's glazed satchel, a man entered our car, picked up the satchel, and set it in the aisle and took the seat beside me. In a moment the conductor came along calling "tickets." The man in my seat showed a pass.

"What's the name?" the conductor queried,

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as he took the card and held it in the glow of his lantern.

"George M. Pullman," said the man at my side. "I stayed in the sleeping-car as long as I could stand it, and made my escape. You might as well try to sleep in the middle of Broadway. The berths rattle, and I was bumped around until I thought a horse and wagon were running over me."

Soon after that he began drawing a diagram on a large envelope with a lead-pencil, and as he sat beside me I saw the beginning of a new chapter in railroad history.

From every point of the compass, that night, people were on their way to the Falls. Next morning they would see wonderful things—athletic contests, a balloon ascension, and a man walking across the chasm on a rope. I had longed to see the "big water-hammers" and the fleet horses. I thought chiefly of them.

We arrived safely, and Sam led his wife by the hand through noisy crowds, and warned me to keep near. We travelled a long time trying to find shelter within our means. We found a place at last, although at a price that made us thoughtful. I was a little worried for myself, there in the cold, indifferent crowds, with so little in my pocket. I felt so very small

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that day, and feared there was no hope for me.

Well, when the morning had come and I stood gazing at the water-hammers and the flying horses below, and wondering how men were going to tame and control them, who should come and whack me on the shoulder but Bony Squares.

"Hello—old boy!" said he; "here's that two dollars I borrowed."

It was almost a shock to me—his unexpected honesty and my good-fortune. After all, he could not be so bad as I had thought him.

"Broke and lookin' for a job, I suppose?" he queried, with a smile.

"I've only a little money, and don't know yet what I'm going to do."

"How would you like to earn fifty dollars to-day?"

Fifty dollars! It was a great sum! I could go home with it and possibly pay my fine, if that were necessary. But how so much in a day if it were honest money?

"It will take nerve," he said. "I guess you're not brave enough."

"You're wrong there. I'm brave enough for any work—if it's honest."

"Oh, it's as honest as my aunt Maria," he assured me.

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I knew that venerable lady, and on the score of honor it seemed rather promising.

"It's as safe as standing here on the sidewalk, but, old boy, it will take some nerve," he went on. "It will take more nerve than I've got, and I'm no squab at that."

"What is it?" I asked, burning with curiosity.

"Well, you've heard of the chap who's going to walk a rope across the rapids? It will be way up in the air. You can just see it now, down the river there, hanging between the cliffs. Looks like a spider's thread—but, say, it weighs a ton. I've been helping 'em hang it. The old man wants to carry some light, nervy chap on his shotlders when he makes the trip. There's only one that's used to the game, and he's on a spree, and they're stuck—can't find a fellow game enough for the job."

It is hard to separate a boy from his folly—not all the schools in the world can help much, and for a long time it is like a sword hanging over his head.

I jumped at the offer, for had I not determined for her sake to fear no peril?

"Come on, then," said Bony. "He'll want to try you, and there's no time to lose."

I went to Sam and Fannie, and promised to see them at the inn at six.

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"Look out for scamps, boy," Sam whispered. "Keep your eye peeled."

I assured him that I would do so, and hurried down the high shore with Bony.

I wonder, sometimes, that I let myself go on. Well, there is something deep in it which I do not profess to understand. The spirit of the time was in me, and I was like ten thousand others. Men loved the perils of adventure those days. No speculation was too reckless for them, no hazard too fearful, no enterprise too difficult. The risks of the desert and the plains and the battle-field had schooled us for that kind of business.

Well, I had learned one thing, at least, since the last lesson—that a good heart may be in a rough body. Remember—you children of luxury—that some rather hard-handed people have been my friends.

ADVENTURE X

WHICH IS THE ADVENTURE OF CRICKET ON THE HEMPEN BRIDGE



WE made our way through crowds of people near the end of the great rope. Bony shouted like one in authority, and they let us pass. We found the rope-walker in a small tent near the edge of the precipice. He was a big, brawny Frenchman, who reminded me of the picture of Goliath confronted by David in my bedchamber at home. He surveyed me from head to foot while Bony called some one aside—it was a man I became acquainted with in due time—and addressed him confidentially. Looking out, I could see the long rope dipping low in the chasm from the cliff's edge and ascending to the farther shore; I could hear the roar of the rapids far below us, and felt a little tremor inside of me. Really, now that I had a chance to make her and all

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the world wonder at me, I thought of backing out. However, I was not brave enough for that.

The great man came presently, and took hold of my arms and lifted me as if I had been a sack of potatoes. It seemed revolting, I remember, to be so handled, for, clearly, he had no respect for me, and with good reason. He said that he would try me when the rope was ready, and did, and said I would do. Bony and I went outside the tent and saw the great rope being tightened with horse and capstan. It lay almost level, by-and-by, in a long, sweeping curve that could have gone to the moon, I fancy, if its circle had been completed. The Frenchman came out of his tent presently, in tights and shoulder-braces of new leather, upon which two loops or handles had been fastened, one over each shoulder. He carefully examined the capstan and the pawls beneath it. He spoke a swift word or two in French, whereupon a young man, who acted as interpreter, requested me to remove my boots, and I did so. Then the performer stepped in front of me, and, reaching backward over his body, took my hands in his. I jumped to his back and caught the loops over my wrists and clung to the leathern braces, while he carefully placed my feet on his hips.

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The big Frenchman took a few paces and began to chatter.

"Loosen up a little," said the interpreter. "Don't stand so stiff. There, that's better."

An attendant brought the balancing-rod, and the performer took it and approached the end of the rope. I could now look down far into the abyss and felt my heart failing me. But I thought of Jo, and imagined that she was there, and said to myself that I would rather die than be a coward. Before I knew it he was on the slant of the rope and slowly descending, and so silently it seemed as if he were walking the soft air. I heard a murmur start suddenly, and go up and down the shore near us. The roar of the waters burst upon me from below. I knew that there was plenty of air beneath us, but was not brave enough to look down through that long, long drop to the foamy water-floor of the chasm. I kept my eyes on the tree-top at the edge of the farther cliff. I heard a voice call to me:

"Are you afraid?"

I shook my head and answered, "No."

The performer stopped and began to sway a little, his rod moving up and down. I tightened my grip and breathed faster. I remember well the play of his muscles under me. I could feel

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a change in their action—he was going backward, but very slowly. The roar of the water was diminishing, and stopped as suddenly as it began. We were back on the earth again, and I was very glad and a little shaky.

Well, the Frenchman said that I would do, and half a dozen men shook my hand and made me proud with their compliments. The interpreter told me that we would “cross the bridge” at three, and that I should wait there and have my dinner with them. The big Frenchman put on his clothes and drove away in a carriage.

Those hours of waiting were a great trial to me. I paced up and down before the tent, and Bony tried to talk to me, but I said little and heard less. I remember his telling in a whisper that they would not take a boy so young without the consent of his parents, and that he had told them that he was my father. I assured him, with dignity, that I would not lie about it.

“Just say nothing. I’ll do all the lying that’s necessary,” said Bony.

“If they ask me I shall tell the truth,” I affirmed.

“You’d better not put me in a hole when I’m trying to do you a favor,” Bony pleaded.

I made no answer, but somehow his words had cheapened the enterprise, of which I had had

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no high opinion since the performer had lifted me as if I were a thing.

The edges of the cliffs began to turn black with people, and I could hear the sound of many voices. Suddenly those near us began cheering. The great Frenchman had returned. It was about three o'clock. He came straight to me, and shook my hand, and said in French:

"*Courage!*" and added something which I could not understand.

"You'll be as safe as you are here," said the interpreter. "Don't jump if he sways a little, and don't look down."

The Frenchman hurried to his tent. It was time to "cross the bridge."

They gave me a pair of white stockings with soles of corrugated rubber, and I drew them on.

The minutes dragged while the Frenchman was dressing. He came out in pink tights, and the crowd, pressing on the ropes around us, began to cheer. He tried his pole, and then came straight to me. That was a bad moment, and I felt like running for my life, but—no—I could not do so now. The interpreter asked me to remove my coat and put on a close-fitting cap in place of the hat I wore.

In a second we were on the rope, and he began reaching for his balance. He felt his way slowly.

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The people were cheering and waving their handkerchiefs. The bands ceased playing. He quickened his pace, and went on with a steady stride. A roar of excitement followed the cheering, and then a hush fell on the crowds. For half a moment I could hear only the breathing of the performer and my own heart-beat. Then I heard the snort of the "white horses" far below me. Suddenly the shrill, hysterical cry of a woman rose out of the silence. Right after that I could hear the groans of men behind us, and wild peals of laughter that echoed through the deep chasm and had a weird note in them.

There were those for whom the sight of our peril was as a nightmare. Phrases of prayer came out to my ears—"God have mercy on them," and the like. Little children called to us. There were two or three men who groaned at every step of the walker, as if they felt the strain of his muscles. It was an old Roman spectacle, and at no other time in the nineteenth century would it have been possible.

I had kept my eyes on the tree-top, and now I could see the lift of the rope before me; I could hear it creak as it bent beneath us. For an instant I let my glance fall. Down, down it went like a plummet sounding the depths below. I shut my eyes, but my thoughts went plunging

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downward. I was like a man with his hands full of eggs—one falls, and then they all begin to slip away.

When I looked again the cliffs were reeling before us. I had to stop them, single-handed, and I can tell you it was a task. With a mighty effort I shoved them back into place again and held them down—at least, that is the way I thought of it.

We were down in the hollow of the rope, about half-way across the chasm, and were swinging a little in a wind current. The Frenchman slowed his pace, and I could feel the changing tension of his muscles. He struck the rope with one foot and then the other—a sort of hammer blow. It checked the swing, and for half a second he seemed to cling with his feet. He took three quick steps, and settled into an even pace again. I thought of letting go, for the relief of it. But this notion came to me, and I laugh when I think of its oddity: if I should let go I should lose the fifty dollars, which would buy something fine for my mother. And I clung so that my hands ached. I watched a swallow, and ceased to think of myself. That little bird may have saved my life, for me and for you. He coasted through the sunlit air almost to the point of my nose, checked himself with a giggle of surprise,

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and wound us in loops of song. Somehow it heartened me to hear him.

The rope grew steeper. Now it seemed an impossible journey there ahead of us. But he went on with a steady stride, and the hempen hill bent inward as he put his feet upon it. With joy I could see my tree-top coming nearer, but every step I had to look up a little farther to see it. Suddenly the rope began to swing again—I do not know why. It has been said that some reckless fellow had wilfully pulled a guy-rope. The whole side of the cliff began to rock as before. The strands of muscle under me tightened quickly. The performer slowed his pace, and stopped for half a second. The ends of his pole went up and down like a teeter-board. Again his feet struck the rope.

"Courage!" he whispered.

He took two or three quick steps and stopped again. He had checked the swing of the rope, and now resumed his progress up the steep hill. He climbed slowly near the end of it, and a mighty cheer ran up and down the edge of the cliffs when he sprang ashore.

I jumped from his back, and saw, when he shook my hand, that his own trembled a bit and that he was breathing heavily.

He put on a suit of clothes and beckoned me to

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a carriage that stood near. I took a seat beside him, and went to his inn. The interpreter met us there, and had my boots, coat, and hat with him.

"Monsieur wishes me to thank you, and say that we have paid your father," he remarked.

"My father!"

"Yes; the man who came with you. Is he not your father?"

"No," I said, "and he has taken my money and gone with it."

So bitter was my disappointment that I sat down upon the floor, and covered my face and wept. Then there was a great chattering in French, and the performer came and gave me a pat of sympathy on my shoulder and a ten-dollar bill.

A crowd of curious people followed me on my way to my inn—mostly boys of about my own age and younger. They felt of my garments, and ran before me, staring into my face. Grievous and heavy was my sense of distinction. It covered me with shame. There was something wrong about my bravery.

At the inn I found Sam and his bride and Ephraim Baker. Somehow they had heard of my part in the rope-walking.

"Did that crowd of boys follow you?" Sam inquired.

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"Yes."

"They can't see the biggest fool in America *every day*," said Mr. Baker.

Well, I suddenly got a strong desire to move on. I was a bit wiser when I started for Graham's hotel in Buffalo, where Mr. McCarthy was to meet me. Ephraim Baker had called me a fool, but I knew better than that. I had sense enough now, at least, to understand the difference between courage and folly. It is about the last lesson of boyhood.

That narrow, bending path of hemp had been for me a bridge between the cliffs of youth and young manhood, of recklessness and prudence. The crossing is ever full of peril, and there is always some one to pull the rope and increase our difficulty.

I asked Sam and his bride to say nothing of my adventure in Summerville, and bade them good-bye at the depot, and went on my way to a new school of experience.

ADVENTURE XI

IN WHICH CRICKET MEETS THE HAND-MADE GENTLEMAN AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE



GRAHAM'S hotel was near the depot. I asked my way of an officer, and he went with me. At the desk I inquired timidly for my friend.

"Mr. James Henry McCarthy is here," the clerk answered, with a smile. "He is making the homes of this city bright and beautiful. Wish to see him?"

"Yes," I answered.

He called a colored youth, and sent word to Mr. McCarthy. The colored youth returned presently, and said:

"Mr. McCarthy says, 'Please ask the gentleman to send up his card.'"

I wrote my name on a card, and in a few minutes presented myself at Mr. McCarthy's door.

"I am pleased to see you," said he, with dignity. "Come in."

Two Important Meetings

He was well dressed in new clothing.

"How are you?" I inquired.

"How do I look?" he asked, promptly.

"Splendid," was my answer.

"That suit cost me twenty-one dollars," he remarked, with a glance at himself. "Feel of the cloth."

I did as he bade me.

"Isn't this a grand room?" he went on. "I guess you must have thought that I was getting along in the world when you were asked to send up your card to Mr. McCarthy."

He laughed, and rattled his change.

"Will you have a cigar?" he asked, removing two from his waistcoat-pocket.

"I do not smoke."

"Nor I," said he, "but I carry them for the sake of appearances."

"How is business?"

"Grand," said he. "I have six men at work for me, and have started a little factory at home. My sister makes Sal, and the agents buy it from us, and so we have no bother. We ship it in crates, like a lot of eggs, and each ball is neatly wrapped and all ready for the customer. I am also beginning the manufacture of soap."

I expressed my delight over his good-fortune.

"How are you getting along?" he asked.

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I told him the story of my failure.

"There's the trouble," said Mr. McCarthy.
"A green hand is apt to slip down making the goods.

"There's many a fall
'Twixt the powder and ball,"

as ye might say. That's why I started the factory."

I paid my debt to him.

"Are you going to take out another line of goods?" he asked.

"No; I'm going home," was my answer. "I'll write to you if I decide to try it again."

"Maybe you need this money to get home with," he suggested, in a careless and opulent manner.

"No; I have enough," was my answer.

"Sit down, an' le' 's have a little visit," said he. "I like you, an' by-an'-by I'll take you out an' show you the sights. I want to treat you as one gentleman would treat another. Have you noticed that I don't say 'ain't' for 'isn't' or 'them' for 'those' any more?"

"I notice that you speak very properly," I assured him.

"I've got a grammar, and have begun to study it," said he. "My tea-pot is all made, as

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ye might say, an' I have begun to put a polish on it. Let me show ye."

He rose and put on his hat.

"Now, suppose I've rung the bell an' Mrs. Smith opens the door. I bow so, and say: 'Good-morning, madam,' or 'Good-afternoon, madam. Would you like to engage a servant who will work for you at half a cent a day and board herself? I have one of the name of Sal. Sal cleans woodwork, silver, and all kinds of metal, and never complains.'

"I don't talk as much as I used to. Some way it don't sound honest, and I find out that gentlemen are not apt to be gabby. I try to please and show that I want to earn an honest living, and I get along.

"Ye see, the children like me because I like them, and everybody is glad to see me when I come around. The other day a woman asked me to mind her children while she went of an errand. It would have tickled you to see how they piled on me."

He sat in a chair and laughed, and put his wooden leg on the bed, and pulled a grip and two pillows into his lap, and flung the bolster over his leg.

"There, that's about the way I looked," he went on, with a laugh. "I made faces for 'em

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and told 'em how I lost my leg, and we had a grand time of it. It's the same way with grown-up folks. If you want them to like you, you've got to like them. A gentleman never speaks badly of any one; that's another thing I've learnt."

"I'm not a gentleman, then," I answered.

"Why?"

"There's one man about whom I couldn't say anything mean enough."

"Well, if you owe him a thrashing, wait until you can pay him off proper. You can't do it with your tongue."

I knew then that James Henry McCarthy, crude as he was, had got a little ahead of me.

"You see, I'm working on my gentleman every day," he went on. "I'll have him in decent shape by-an'-by. I read a good deal, because every gentleman reads, and I'm beginning to enjoy it."

"I wish you'd make me a visit; I want you to meet my mother," said I.

"I'd like to," he answered. "You must come from a very respectable family."

"What makes you think so?" I asked.

"Oh, I can tell by your looks and your way of talking," he remarked. "You've been well brought up—a ready-made gentleman, as ye

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might say. It's grand to have all that done for ye. I wasn't so lucky. But I'm made upon honor—hand-sewed and stitched and double-soled. I ought to wear well. You could rely on me to behave myself if you took me into your home."

Just then a colored boy came to the door and said: "There's a man down-stairs who wants to see Mr. McCarthy, and he won't give me a card."

"Show the gentleman up," said my friend, as if accustomed to many callers.

Presently in walked the Pearl of great price with the dog, Mr. Barker. I was overjoyed to see them.

"Let me feel of you," he said, as he took my hand. "Now don't be scairt an' jump out o' the window. Just agree to stay with me for a minute. I'll agree not to kill you. I—I couldn't get even with you in that way."

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"First, le' 's have the minutes of the previous meetin'," said Mr. Pearl.

It must be remembered that H. M. Pearl, Esq., had lived through years of oratory and public assemblage, and that his thoughts ran more or less in their cant.

"The meeting will now come to order, and Mr.

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Barker will take the floor," said the Pearl of great price.

The dog came and stood on his hind feet, facing his master.

"You will recall," said Mr. Pearl, addressing the animal, "that I once spoke to you on the subject of bad company. Is the same true to-day or not?"

The dog gave a loud bark.

"It is true," said Mr. Pearl; "of course it is true! Therefore, Mr. Barker, please bear in mind that there is nothing that makes so much trouble as bad company. It will bring your black hairs in sorrow to the grave."

The dog was excused, and the Pearl turned to me and said:

"You went into the barn at Baker's, an' I'll swear ye didn't come out of it."

It was he, then, who had followed me. My heart began to warm with delight, and that singular masquerade of mine came back to me, and I went through it all for them. So great was the amusement of Mr. Pearl that he flitted his feet in the air and laughed, while Mr. McCarthy whacked his wooden leg with the stove poker, and shook his head, and gave an odd cackle. Alas! I cannot tell it now as I did then, for those days I had the heart of youth in me and a voice for joy.

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"I've chased you for three weeks," said the Pearl. "You're like a flea on the body o' the United States. I had a talk with a friend o' your mother, an' set out to bring you back. Made a birch-bark canoe, an' run her down to the St. Lawrence an' up to the end o' the lake. Heard from your mother at Sackett's; she said you were at Baker's and would meet Mr. McCarthy here. You jumped from Baker's to somewhere, an' then to the Falls, an' then here, an' I've been a jump behind you all the way."

I rose, dumb with surprise, and Mr. Pearl continued:

"I got back to Mill Pond a day or two after you an' Bony lit out. A good deal was bein' said, an' I had to lick a man for sayin' a part of it, which the said language wasn't calculated to improve your reputation. Oh, I tell ye, things have warmed up an' transpired since you went away! I says to 'em that you wasn't any Dan'l Webster, an' that Bony had drawed you into his game. I know you didn't have no more idea o' wrong-doin' than a pickerel has of a vest-pocket. One day I promised to go down to the big river an' see if I could pick ye up. So here I am, an' the next thing in the order of exercises will be new business. We've got to convey ourselves out o' here immediately, if not sooner."

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"I am ready," I said, rising and putting on my hat.

"We've got to move, an' conversation won't carry us. To get down to plain language, have you any money?"

"Eight dollars and forty-three cents," I answered.

"The report is accepted," Mr. Pearl went on. "It is as good as a million dollars. We'll go down to the lake an' take a steamer, get off at Sackett's, walk a few miles, an' proceed with our own steam."

It was arranged, with the hearty concurrence of H. M. Pearl, Esq., that Mr. McCarthy should go with us.

"It will give me a rest, and I can put some agents at work in your part of the country," said the latter.

We set out together, and got to Sackett's Harbor next day. It was a long walk to the beach at Anderson's, where the big canoe of my friend was lying. He had left a small tent and two horse-blankets in a house near by. Mr. McCarthy bought a basket of provisions at a store, and soon after noon of the second day of our journey we were all aboard and headed down the river, Mr. Pearl in the stern seat and I in the bow. We two had paddles, while Mr.

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McCarthy sat amidships near the dog, pushing further into the sea of knowledge with his grammar and dictionary. We went on with a steady stroke, and a light breeze behind us. It was a cloudless day, and the cool, crystal floor of the river chasm tempered the heat of the sun.

"I am in pursuit of history," Mr. McCarthy remarked soon.

"Well, if you get acquainted with history, by-an'-by history is apt to get acquainted with you," Mr. Pearl remarked.

"I have here a pack of white cards," Mr. McCarthy went on. "Every one contains a fact. I'll read a few of them to show you what I mean. Number one says, 'Columbus discovered America, 1492'; number two says, 'The French settled at Quebec in 1608'; number three says, 'The Spanish settled at St. Augustine in 1565,' and so on. Here's a hundred cards and a hundred facts. First, I put 'em all in one coat-pocket. Every day I take out a card and learn what's on it, and put it into another pocket, and keep the pack moving."

"Have you got it down that H. M. Pearl, Esquire, was born at Machias, Maine, in 1817?" was a query that came from the stern seat.

"No; Hildreth says that all history is necessarily incomplete," Mr. McCarthy answered, with

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a laugh. "I like that word *incomplete*. It has a good sound to it. I've got my book full of new words. Say, what's a horruck? It ain't in my dictionary."

I explained the term, which he had overheard in Pearl's talk at Graham's.

The islands were now thick around us, and we landed in a little cove on one of them, and went up under the shade of the trees for a bite of luncheon.

"There's power for ye," said Mr. Pearl, with a glance at the river sweeping by us. "Lord! she's like a belt off the world's engine."

I had begun to see the power in the man Pearl himself, young as I was. It is clear to me now: the genius of the Republic, soon to express itself in dauntless enterprise, in prodigious and unheard-of enginery, had begun to stir in him; the imagination that builds and discovers, the humor that accepts failure without discouragement, the energy which may not be overcome were all in this man.

"If I had capital," Mr. Pearl added, presently, "I'd show ye some actions which speak louder than words."

"What would you do with it?" I asked.

"Well, here's the river," he said, mapping it on a stretch of sand with his finger. "Here's

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the falls at your house. Here's the town o' Heartsdale, about half a mile up the river—shops an' mills an' stores an' houses an' two thousand people, all about as slow as West Injy molasses."

He looked up at us, and took another bite.

"What they need is power," he went on. "That's what 'll put the zip into a town. It 'll wake up the people, an' shake 'em off the cracker-barrels an' tumble 'em out o' the rockin'-chairs. It 'll set a pace for 'em."

I began to wonder what rude miracle he proposed for the dreaming village of Heartsdale.

"It was located wrong," he went on; "but there it is, an' I know how to shove some power into it—power enough to put everything on the jump." He turned to Mr. McCarthy, and added: "Make a note in your history that H. M. Pearl, Esquire, said it, an' that a full account of his actions will appear in a later volume."

I asked him how he proposed to do this wonderful thing.

"How, wherefore, and, also, why," he said, as he took another bite of cheese. "Well, ye know where the river jumps over the rocks an' stands up like a man thirty feet tall, there by your house? That's where I'll perform my actions—right there." He drew a line in the sand.

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"Here's a stream o' water thirty feet wide an' a foot an' a half thick. There's a horse-power in every square foot of it. I'll take off, say, one-quarter o' the fall an' head her into an iron pipe an' let her jump down. She strikes like a trip-hammer, dropping thirty feet in a big, cast-iron cylinder. There are holes around the bottom of it. The water squirts through 'em with power enough to kick a man's leg off. Now, I'll put a wheel there at the bottom, with a big steel rim that has buckets on it like the slats in a windmill. Well, out come the jets o' water an' give them buckets a cuff that sets the wheel goin'. A shaft on this wheel moves the dynamo, an' there you have it."

"What?" Mr. McCarthy asked.

"Electricity," was the prompt answer of the Pearl. "Don't you know how it's made? Nor I, neither, but I guess I can come as nigh tellin' as any one. Here's a stationary wheel out by the end o' the shaft with some short bars of iron fastened to the rim of it, an' each bar is wound with a coil o' wire. Now, when ye send a current through the coil, that bar o' iron gets alive. It will take hold o' any other piece o' iron an' hang on like a bulldog. Folk call it a magnet, an' it's some like a boy—never gives any reason for his conduct which nobody understands. It

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just takes hold, an' that's all there is about it. Now, there's another wheel that moves with the shaft an' has the same number o' bar ends on it, all made o' soft iron but not wrapped with wire. Set these wheels parallel an' close, so the bar ends are not more 'n a quarter of an inch apart. The magnets begin to pull. The power in 'em jumps over that quarter-inch o' open space an' takes hold o' the soft iron. You have to put an awful power on the shaft to stir the one wheel on account o' the cling o' the magnets. It's like pullin' a cat out of a hole backwards. The power begins to spit an' make actions. When you move the wheel an' break the hold o' the magnets the power begins to travel an' chases 'round the rim. It opens the gate o' the great reservoir an' out comes a stream, an' it's 'lectricity. Nobody knows why nor wherefore, an' the magnets keep to work an' say nothin'. It's like churnin' cream till ye get butter. Ye break the pull o' the magnets an' set it whirlin' in a kind of a current, an' you get a power that zips off on a wire at the rate of a hundred and eighty thousand miles in a second. That's 'lectricity. It's rather fractious an' fond o' travel. But ye can coop it up in the wheels an' steer it where ye like. Ye can pen it in with glass an' rubber an' other things just as easy as ye can hold water with a tin pail.

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You hold it in copper sections, fastened to both wheels, sweep it up with a brush, an' send it off on a wire. I've got a scheme for takin' it from the other end o' the wire in large or small quantities to suit the purchaser, an' I believe that I can move all the wheels in Heartsdale, an' a good many more."

"If I get along in business maybe I can furnish the capital one o' these days," said Mr. McCarthy.

"Then you'll begin to make history," said the Pearl of great price.

Mr. McCarthy looked thoughtful. The idea of making history brightened his eyes.

"We will see what can be done," he answered.

Again we took our places in the canoe, and it seemed to spring away with the current.

"We'll ride the belt," said Mr. Pearl. "We ought to make ten miles between now an' sundown."

The breeze left us, and the river slackened its pace in a gentler mood. Reeds lined its margin with soft shadows into which, often, bunches of blue iris flung their color.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. McCarthy, presently, "I'm in need of advice."

"Touchin' what subject?" Mr. Pearl inquired.

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"My mind is set on matrimony," said the young man.

"Tell it to get up an' move on," said Mr. Pearl.

"Are you in love?" I asked.

"I fear that I am," said Mr. McCarthy, with his accustomed frankness.

"All depends on the other party," said Mr. Pearl.

"It's a beautiful girl by the name o' Betsey Fame," the boy answered.

"Better be Miss Fame than Misfortune," said the Pearl of great price.

"My trouble is all on account of this wooden leg," Mr. McCarthy explained. "I saved her mother's life in a runaway an' got my ankle smashed. She took care o' me when I was laid up, and told me to study an' improve my mind and be a gentleman. I fell in love with her, and I'm getting along. But my gentleman has begun to crush the life out o' Pegleg McCarthy. He's killed my best hope, for he won't let me ask her to marry me. She's a wonderful nice girl, and belongs to a good family. But here's my wooden leg, and it comes o' my tryin' to save her mother. She might think she had ought to accept me whether she cares for me or not. She's just that kind of a girl. Do you think it's fair for me to ask her? I don't."

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Pearl and I rested the paddles. Our playful spirit had gone out of us in a jiffy.

"By the great horn spoon!" Pearl exclaimed.

"Me being a gentleman, what can I do?" Mr. McCarthy inquired.

"Well, first you go to New York an' get yourself a decent leg, if you can afford it," said the Pearl of great price. "There's a man by the name o' Marks made a leg for a friend o' mine. He wears a shoe an' walks as well as ever. Ye wouldn't know that he had a wooden leg. It's a case o' wood an' wouldn't."

"That's a good idea," said Mr. McCarthy.

"Then you can tell her that you're really better off than you was before the accident—that you've only half the liability to pains in the feet. Go to work an' pile up some money, an' show her that nobody has any license to be sorry for you. Maybe you'll see your chance by-an'-by."

"I believe that I'm going to be a rich man," said Mr. McCarthy. "I kind o' feel it in my bones."

"My bones are beginnin' to talk to me," said the Pearl, as he moved in his seat a little. "We must begin to look for a camping-place."

The sun had gone down, and glowing bars of cloud were drifting over the west. Their reflection made a long, golden raft in the ripples.

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The raft seemed to break as I was looking, and its timber floated far and wide into dusky coves and marshes, and some of it went leaping through rapids half a mile below. As we rode along in the still twilight, Mr. Pearl sang an old ballad in a voice of remarkable power and sweetness. Well, the river and the shadows and the sky sang with him, as I am well aware, but no music ever got so deep in me as that did.

We got out on a pebble beach. There were grassy shores, close-cropped by cattle, near us, and a hard-wood grove. The Pearl began to put up his tent, while we gathered a bit of wood for a fire, and spread our supper on a big napkin. When we had eaten, Mr. Pearl removed his coat and vest from a carpet-bag. He spread the coat over his shoulders, but hung the vest on a stick, which he had driven into the ground beside him. He had turned it inside out, so that two medals, pinned to its lining, could be seen in the firelight.

"What are they?" Mr. McCarthy asked.

"Medals of honor." The Pearl spoke carelessly as he was filling his pipe.

"Medals of honor!" exclaimed Mr. McCarthy. "How did you get 'em?"

"Won 'em in the Mexican War."

"Why don't you wear 'em on the outside of your jacket?" Mr. McCarthy inquired.

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"I rise to a point of order," said the Pearl, as he got to his feet. "If I had a thousand dollars, would I wear it on the outside o' my pocket? Or if I was Mr. McCarthy, would I have to tell people that I was a gentleman?"

The Pearl gathered power like a locomotive when he got to going. His words conveyed a message of special value to Mr. McCarthy.

"Never want to show your cards more than is necessary before you play 'em," the Pearl continued. "I could have used those medals to get a job many a time when I wouldn't, any more than you'd let a girl marry you out o' pity. There have been years when I wa'n't as good as the medals—there's the truth of it. Every night when I go to bed I hang that vest on a chair, wrong side out, an' take a look at 'em, an' try to make myself as good as they are."

"Tell me how you won them?" Mr. McCarthy urged.

"That isn't in the order o' exercises," the Pearl went on. "The chair begs to advise the gentleman from Hermon Center that if he, the said gentleman, ever succeeds in doing a big thing, the sooner *he* forgets it the longer it will be remembered. If a man makes his history it's all that can be expected o' him. Somebody else ought to do the tellin', if it has to be told."

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"That's sound," said Mr. McCarthy, "and I'm going to put it down in my note-book."

"I'm goin' to forget it," said the Pearl, as he began to prepare for bed.

We were up at sunrise in the morning. Late that day we landed, and Pearl took the canoe on his back and we put across country. A walk of six miles brought us to our own river, and we saved thereby a day of water travel. The sun was low when we wet our canoe again.

"The committee on refreshments will please report," said Mr. Pearl, when he had put down his load.

Mr. McCarthy reported by laying out three pieces of cheese, half a dozen crackers, and a bit of dried beef.

The Pearl called "Mr. Barker," and when the animal stood up before him, said: "The chair respectfully suggests that without food it will soon have no leg to stand on. You should cultivate the virtue of thoughtfulness. Do not wait to be told, Mr. Barker, but always consider what is to be done, and do it."

If the Pearl had advice to give he invariably addressed it to "Mr. Barker," and so it came to us through the dog, as one might say, and was never lost upon us.

Mr. McCarthy and I hurried away, while Mr.

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Pearl got a fire going. We were both ashamed that the idea of increasing our stores had not occurred to us. We returned soon with eggs and bacon, and new bread and coffee, and all needed appliances.

"I move that the report be laid on the table," said Mr. Pearl, as he began to warm the spider.

I think always with a grateful heart of that supper, which we ate in the cool twilight, with a knoll for a table, and, for a cloth, a mat of grass interwoven with white clover blossoms. It was quite dusk when we launched the canoe and resumed our journey.

Had I words fit for beauty and delight, I should try to tell of our night journey on the river—of the wondrous flattery of moon and shadow, of wet banks showered with "barbaric pearl," of geese that sailed by, magnified to swanlike size, of a little village on the shore, whose painted boards shone like white marble and filled the eye with illusions of splendor and grand proportion.

When we were over the last carry at Mill Pond the hand-made gentleman fell asleep, but we kept on with a steady stroke of the paddles. I would not be the first to speak of stopping, for every stroke brought me nearer home, and the thought of it!—worth all the misery and peril

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I had known. Near two o'clock we got out on the shore, a mile below the Mill House, and lay down with our blankets and went to sleep.

The sunlight and the robins wakened us. It was one of my best days—that of my return. So much of it has come along up the road with me! Especially I remember its glad faces and the touch of its loving hands, and the sound of its gentle voices and its peace. Who can estimate the value of such a day save one who has been blessed with it? True, the moments go like falling water, but they return and are never quite ended, after all.

The cascade seemed to sing a welcome with its big, hearty voice. The garden flowers expressed my happiness in color, and sent their perfume to bid me welcome at the gate.

The Pearl and the hand-made gentleman turned away while I went up the old stair with my arms around my mother and sister, now dearer than ever to me. We sat down upon the old sofa, and I began to ravel out my follies. They rose to prepare breakfast, and I looked about me. There were the familiar three commandments of my mother hanging on the wall:

BE TRUTHFUL. BE KIND. BE HAPPY.

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"If I had told the truth to Mr. Weatherby I would never have gone away," was my remark.

"The more truth the less trouble," said my mother. "It keeps you in the right road. If you're going to tell the truth you've got to make it worth telling, or, at least, good enough so that you will not be ashamed of it."

While we had learned those three commandments, not until now had I begun to feel the power in them.

I looked about me at all the familiar things: the pictures—especially a crayon portrait of my father—the mottos, wrought in colored yarn. Wisdom was more available than art those days in the north country, and the walls of many a simple home were decorated with the sayings of bard or prophet, each neatly framed. My mother's mottos were all her own, however. She was a daughter of the pioneers who had learned much in a hard school of experience. The best of it all had come down to her, and was a bit refined by her own thought. There was a kind of history in those mottos that hung on the walls of the Mill House—the heart history of men who had had to think for themselves. I read them anew and thoughtfully:

The kindly will never want a friend;
The mean will never lack an enemy.

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One good word deserves another,
But receives more than it deserves.

To-day is the best of all days,
But to-morrow will be better.

Let heaven begin here.

After all my regretful thinking on that journey, which had now come to its end, these words began to fill with meaning. That last injunction, printed in golden threads, sank deeply into my heart and led to this conviction: that the Mill House was one of the outlying provinces of heaven; far removed, maybe, but still as much a part of it as those isles ten thousand miles from London are a part of the British Empire.

Breakfast being ready, I went down after my good friends. The Pearl would not come in.

"Just hand me a little snack," said he; "I ain't fit to go in."

He would not yield to urging, and so I brought his breakfast to him, and he sat down and ate at the foot of the stairway.

My mother and sister sat at the table with Mr. McCarthy and me. The manners of the hand-made gentleman became exceedingly formal. He spoke only when spoken to, save when he said:

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"May I be so bold as to ask for a glass of water?"

When I suggested the subject of Sal, he began to relax, and went to his grip and gravely presented my mother with a dozen balls of it.

The breakfast over, my mother went below-stairs with me to thank Mr. Pearl for his kindness, but he was gone. I found her looking up the river, where he was going out of sight, far up the shaded avenue of water, in his canoe. She looked very sad as I walked to the garden with her.

"Come, let us look at the flowers," she said, as she put her arm about me. "These roses have just opened this morning; they have been waiting for you, and so has this letter."

My heart quickened, for I had seen the post-mark and the girlish penmanship on the envelope, and had caught its odor of violets. Eagerly I broke the seal, and read as follows:

DEAR FRIEND,— I have just been picking flowers, and they reminded me of your letter. I have not forgotten you; everything that is beautiful makes me think of those days when you were here—we had such a good time; at least, I did. I should like to hear from you often, but I don't want you to think that I care so very, very much. I wouldn't want to have you try to remember me. I still have my troubles, but

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they are not quite so dreadful. Last night my father brought home another young man. I do not like him; he has such a queer way of staring into my eyes, and can talk of nothing but dogs and horses. Fannie has come back, and Sam is with her. He is going to take care of the garden and the grounds until they can find a farm. Fannie says that he has got over being afraid and is very affectionate. I think of you often, and of those pleasant evenings that we had together, and of all that you went through. I wonder if you would dare come again! Well, I am sure that I shall never get another letter from you, even, but I wish you good luck, anyway.

Yours truly,

Jo.

P. S.—I have made this letter short for fear it would bore you.

It was my first letter from a fair maid, and what a state of mind it put me in! My mother read it with a smile.

"It's a pretty letter," said she.

"Not so pretty as Jo," I answered. Then I told about my visit in Summerville.

"And the girl is alone with that old drunkard?" said my mother.

"Yes."

"Too bad! I wish I could see her."

"I love her," I said, soberly.

"Child!" she exclaimed, "you're not yet sixteen."

"A boy has feelings," I protested. "If I'm

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not in love, I'd like to know what it is that makes me feel as I do. I would die for her."

"Yes—yes, I know," she answered, holding my hand in hers. "I was like you when I was a young miss—thought I was in love two or three times when I was not. Write to her if you wish, but you must be fair to her. Don't say a word about it until you see if it lasts. She may not care for you, anyway."

This letter made me sure that she did care for me, however, and that and others like it were, indeed, the treasures of my youth. The notion of being fair to her grew in me, for, after all, my heart had had its change, and was it now to be wholly trusted?

Mr. McCarthy met us at the stairs.

"I've been reading your three commandments," said he to my mother. "Are they in the Bible?"

"Yes; but I got them out of the Book of Nature," said she. "You learn to be truthful by the study of men, for what is a man unless he is himself—the thing he pretends to be? Kindness—I learned that from the earth, where we all reap as we sow, and everything that lives teaches us to be happy. These birds and flowers—see how happy they are! And this boy of mine just returned from the path of error—who could be happier than he is?"

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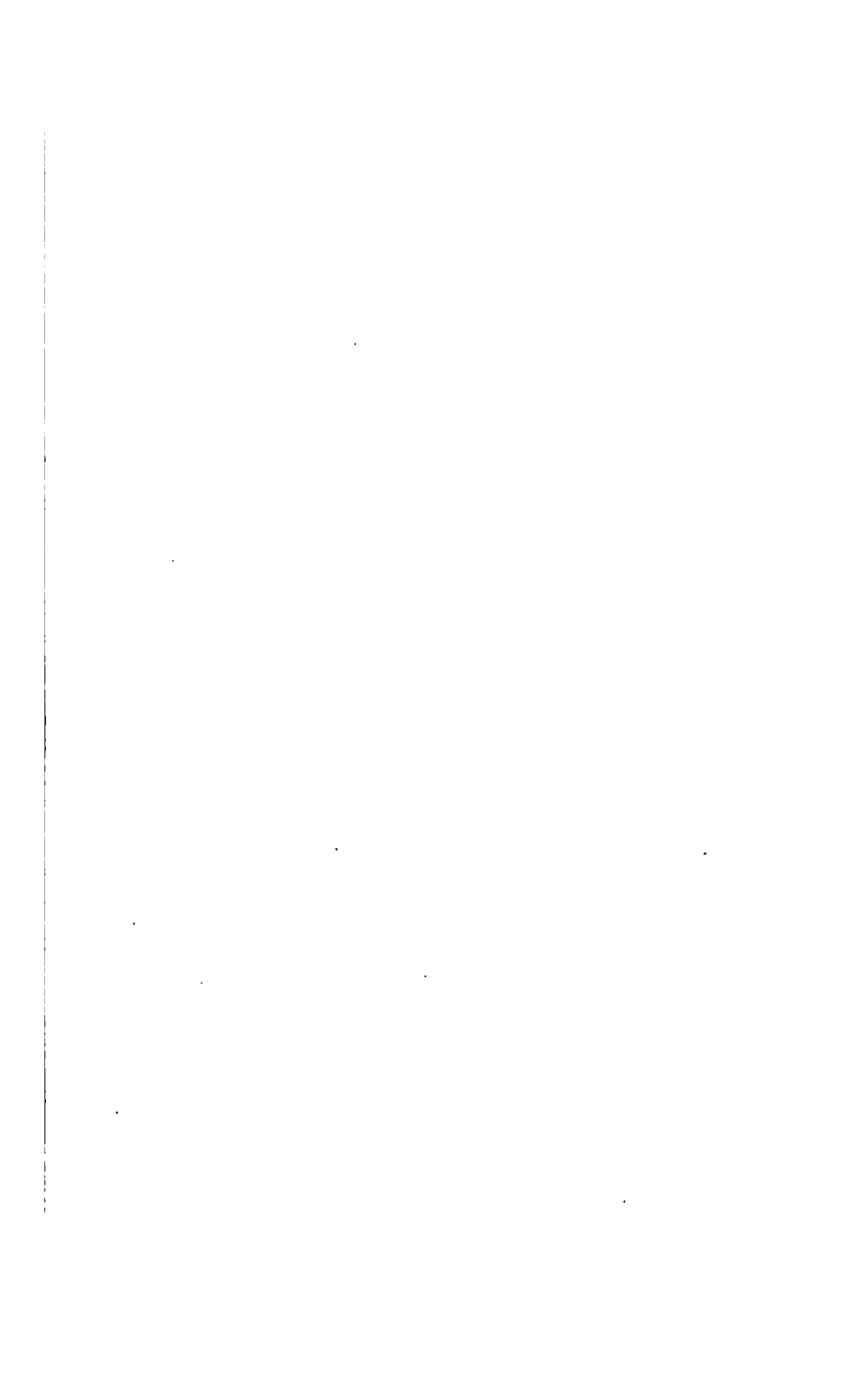
"That's sound," said the hand-made gentleman. "I'm going to write it down in my book."

He sat down and wrote while she helped him a little in the phrasing of his notes.

"I must devote myself to business," said Mr. McCarthy, when he had closed the book. "I will visit the leading villages in the county, and return as expeditiously as possible."

He glanced at me as if to note the effect of this impressive declaration.

"Good luck; and remember here is always a good welcome," my mother said to him, as he took the road to Heartsdale.



Book Two

**In which Cricket Takes the Road to Manhood
and Meets with Sundry Mishaps**



Book Two

**In which Cricket Takes the Road to Manhood
and Meets with Sundry Mishaps**



STAGE I

IN WHICH CRICKET COMES TO A QUEER STOPPING-
PLACE ON THE ROAD TO MANHOOD



R. PEARL had opened a little shop in Heartsdale. It was up an alley next to a large mill, where he could connect his shaft with river-power. A smooth board, lettered with his own brush and nailed above his door, contained the words:

PEARL & COMPANY

One bright, still morning in the early summer I walked to Heartsdale to begin my career anew. My mother wished me to be near home, and I was on my way to the shop of B. Crocket & Son, marble-cutters, who were making a monument for my father. They were going to teach me their trade. Heartsdale had always made me believe it very large and myself very little. Its buildings and its people had seemed to look down upon me

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from a great height. Now that I had been to Buffalo, that old feeling of awe and littleness had gone out of me and must be now, I believed, in the breast of Heartsdale itself, and I carried my head high.

From the eminence of my conceit I got a full view of its languor and littleness. Even the river slowed its pace half a mile above and came on like a spent horse. Near the Mill House half a mile below it began to hurry, and always I had the stir of the rapids in me.

Feet accustomed to the pace of the plow were going into town. The clink of an anvil broke the silence. I had often watched the great blacksmith as he worked. That clinking indicated the flow of his thought and the strength of his convictions. Words fell between hammer-strokes, and were often as hot as the beaten metal.

The shop of B. Crocket & Son, whither I was bound, stood on a narrow byway bordered with small wooden buildings. The shop itself had a little door-yard where headstones and monuments stood among blocks of marble. Inside were benches on which the stone was being trimmed, lettered, and polished. There everything was white with marble-dust. Mr. B. Crocket—called "Judge Crocket" by all who

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knew him, and so called because, in his own way, he pronounced judgment on those who lived and died about him—stood over a headstone cutting an epitaph. A number of men past middle age sat around a small table in one corner playing old sledge. They looked up at me as I entered. A man and a red-headed boy, the latter of about my age, were polishing a block of granite near the far end of the shop. I approached the Judge and bade him good-morning. He looked down out of gray eyes colder than the marble on which he leaned. His pale, wizened face was itself a wonderful bit of sculpture.

"Are you the young Heron?" he asked.

The men who were playing cards began to laugh, and I was a bit stung by it, having a strong sense of dignity.

"I am Mr. Heron," was my answer.

"Huh!" my new employer grunted. "Take off your mister and your coat and vest and put on a pair of overalls."

The men laughed loudly, in spite of the fact that I had been to Buffalo. I felt inclined to resent his words, but held my tongue and did as he bade me, for I had brought some overalls in my satchel.

He went on with his work, and said, presently, that his son would tell me what to do. The

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latter did not give me a mallet and chisel, as I had hoped, but set me polishing with the red-headed boy of my own age, familiarly known as "Swipes." I had been reading the life of Michelangelo, which my mother had bought for me, and dreaming of high achievements. It had come to nothing but sweating over a hand-lathe and slopping in dirty water.

Two of those who played at the table were old soldiers, the third a business man, the fourth a retired farmer. One, with an empty sleeve, entered presently and sat on a half-finished monument that lay near them, as if accepting the invitation cut in its polished face, "Requiescat in pace." He begged a chew of tobacco, and began to talk, telling how he got tobacco hunger in a battle and searched for it in the pockets of the dead. The other soldiers took the cue and told of many a like adventure as they played their game. The retired farmer was not unlike them, for he, too, had begun his long rest. He of the one arm passed a bottle as the game ended. Then all seemed to pry themselves out of their chairs with levers of necessity.

"I've got to go," said one, as he yawned.

"So 've I," said another.

"Here goes," said number three. All rose, save one, and tried their creaking joints.

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It was Mr. Bulford Boggs, the undertaker, who remained in his chair—he that was known far and wide as “Bull” Boggs. His shop was across the way, and a line of parlor furniture filled its front window. He was a full-bodied man with a prominent nose and a short upper lip, and wore a high flaring collar and side-whiskers, now turned gray, and got soothing draughts of indolence from a big, meerschaum pipe. I remember that his nose and front and calm expression reminded me of a meadow-lark. It did seem to me often that he resented human life. There were times when, as he looked at one, his whole manner thus expressed itself:

“What! you living? Good Heavens, man! How do you expect me to get along in business and you living on forever? Why don’t you go hang yourself?”

Soon Mr. Crocket, who had been working silently on a headstone, rested his chisel and looked at Mr. Boggs. Then he read, with quaint irony, the flattering inscription that he had finished:

“It was her turn,” he said. “She was the survivor of three husbands.”

He continued pecking at the stone and also at the character of the deceased lady. His monologue was broken by the sound of his mallet, and I remember it went on as follows:

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"Couldn't even live with herself [whack]. Tried it [whack], an' died [whack]."

Mr. Boggs gave a roar of joy as he held his big pipe in his hand.

"Reminds me of Harrison White [whack, whack]. He traded me a horse for a family monument, an'—wal, he got it for nothing. That horse began to waste away. Come to find out he was twenty-four years old. The horse got the heaves, an' Harrison got religion, but I got nothing. Come here one day an' offered to pray for me [whack]. I told him to pray for the old horse. He gave me up. The old horse died an' so did Harrison. Oh, I've seen 'em come an' go for a good many years [whack, whack, whack]. What do you suppose they wrote out for an inscription to go under his name?"

"I heard once, but I've forgotten," growled the undertaker.

"He paid the debt," said the Judge, soberly, with another whack. "I added something free of charge, an' it was this, 'but not the one due me.—B. Crocket.'"

Mr. Boggs, who sat watching the door of his shop across the way as he listened, let out his mirth in heavy bolts of sound.

There was to be a political meeting, and the town was filling up with people. Mr. Crocket

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and his friend went to the open door of the marble-shop and looked at the crowds passing in the main street. Soon the Judge returned to his task, and Mr. Boggs stood looking out of the door.

"They've all got to die," said the latter, cheerfully, as he surveyed the people. "Whenever I get blue I just think o' that an' take courage."

These hard old cynics were to me a new kind of people. They rejoiced in death—in the destruction of hopes, in the slaughter of reputations. Their rough word-play gave my young soul a shock that I have not yet forgotten. It went on day after day, while I wore away the cold marble and my tender youth.

The whole place and its people reminded me of those lines which I had heard the minister quote in a sermon:

"The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave,
The deep, dank vault, the darkness, and the worm."

But I made no complaint, for my first undertaking had come to naught, and if I failed again what would they think of me—especially Jo and my mother. My employer pecked away at the epitaphs with his chisel and amended them with

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his conversation. Every morning Mr. Boggs and his three companions sat in a corner playing old sledge and boarding their cards with appalling thumps in trying stages of the game, and, after each hand, loudly confessing their calculations.

"If we don't win this game I'll bury you for nothing," was one of the cheering and familiar promises of Mr. Boggs.

The undertaker had a wise and threatening air about him. He often bullied people, using loud words and a pouncing manner. Sometimes he gave advice with a wearied look of toleration, and oh, the sadness of Mr. Boggs at a funeral!

The three friends went away soon after eleven o'clock, whereupon, if there were "nothing doing"—an oft-repeated phrase of the undertaker—he used to sit talking with the Judge or reading a newspaper. One day he fell asleep in his chair. Mr. Crocket printed this inscription on a sheet of cardboard and leaned it against the knees of the undertaker:

Sacred to the Memory of B. Boggs.

The Judge surveyed him with a playful eye, and added, "He is certainly the flower o' the village." It was an apt symbol, for he was, in-

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deed, one of the most perfect flowers of rustic commercialism that ever bloomed.

The village boys relieved the monotony of my life with sundry insults. Having travelled far, as I thought, and endured many perils, and having, moreover, a proud spirit, I was, for my age and size, a bit nearer the goal of manhood than most of them, and my dignity was natural enough. They resented it with jeers and epithets and stickings out of the tongue.

Mr. Crocket and his son went home at five, while I and the red-headed boy continued our labor until six o'clock.

Swipes himself was a melancholy youth who had once swallowed a shingle-nail and who cherished a great fear of it. For poor Swipes that shingle-nail was like the sword of Damocles. The first evening that we were alone together in the shop he confided his worst fears to me, and asked if I knew of any medicine that would be likely to do him good. He complained of pain in the pit of his stomach.

"I've took half a bottle of horse liniment that I found here in the shop," said he. "It may help some."

He was deeply interested in the great fist-fighters, and his hero was John Morrissey. In the last hour of work one day, after the Crockets

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had gone home, three or four boys of about our age gathered in the shop. We had removed our overalls and were getting ready to go, when Swipes approached me. His fists were moving playfully.

"I could put an epitaph on that face o' your'n," he threatened.

"It would be your epitaph," I answered, promptly.

The others laughed and urged me to go on.

He began to jump up and down, with his fists out in front of me.

"Fight me, fight me, if you ain't a coward!" he hissed.

That word was more than I could endure. I flew at Swipes like a panther and floored him. He rose, bleeding, but unwhipped. We fought fiercely up and down among the gravestones, and in a moment were locked together. I had the under hold and forced him into the water-tub. Swipes said that would do, and I released my hold upon him. He rose, dripping, and offered me his hand.

"You're all right," said he, cheerfully. "I only wanted to know if you could fight."

He had a kind of pride in his bruised face, and would not let me wash away the blood.

Directly another boy began to dance in front

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of me. It was a desperate battle I had then, and Swipes, when he saw me getting the worst of it, broke in for the sake of fairness.

"It ain't right," said he. "You tackled him when he was tired."

The bout ended, and Swipes gave me his hand with a cheering word as I left him.

"I told 'em you could fight," he whispered.

I had a hard week of it then, for they were bound to know what I was made of—those warlike and barbaric people. I avenged my wrongs, and stepped off the plane of reprobation and contempt forever.

I tried to like my task, and worked hard and spent three evenings a week with Mr. Pearl. He lived in his little shop, and had been kind enough to offer me what help he could in my studies. He had some learning, a rare talent in mathematics, and a genius for explanation. I brought my suppers with me, and we often ate together.

The first time I entered the shop, after my week of battle, the Pearl looked at me and laughed.

"Confound that dog!" he exclaimed.

The dog stood up before him.

"I've often talked to you about fighting," said the Pearl. "I want t' tell you again it's poor business, Mr. Barker."

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"He's an awful quarrelsome cuss," he added, as he dismissed the dog and turned to me with an apology for delay.

We had scarcely begun our work when Mr. McCarthy entered. He had two good legs under him—so one might have thought—and a shoe on each foot, and a step like that of a sound man. He was "all dressed up," as they used to say, and a bit too well aware of it. He took off his hat and bowed politely.

"Gentleman," said he, "Mr. McCarthy presents his compliments."

"I see that your off foot is on," said Mr. Pearl.

"It's better than ever," said Mr. McCarthy.

"That's good!" exclaimed the Pearl. "You can now make footprints in the sands of time."

"Yes, I've got a pair o' feet and a new leg on my body, and five thousand dollars in the bank, and more coming," Mr. McCarthy went on, while we were dumb with amazement. "You'll find Sal in every drug store north of the Central Road, and I'm going to spread it all over Vermont and Massachusetts. Two or three rivals have sprung up, and I've bought 'em out. I've got forty people at work in my central factory, which is at Rushwater, New York."

"He's geared for high power," said the Pearl,

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as he turned to me. "He's got his belt on the main shaft."

The compliment pleased Mr. McCarthy. His eyes glowed and his fist flashed down upon the bench before him with a loud thump. It was the deep fire of his spirit showing itself in a kind of lightning thrust.

"I'm going to be somebody!" he exclaimed.

"If you can find use for it, you'll get all the power you need right off the big engine," said Mr. Pearl.

"What engine?"

"The one that runs the universe. When you've got accommodation for high power it always comes to you. Then look out for the friction an' you're all right."

After a moment of silence he turned to me and said: "I've heard about the three commandments of your house. They're like those of my shop: Take your power off the main shaft—that means truth. Oil your bearings—kindness. Reduce friction as much as possible—happiness. And that reminds me, how is your gentleman?"

The Pearl turned to Mr. McCarthy as he put the query.

"A little more polished," said the latter. "I think his deportment has improved, an' he can converse upon many subjects or write an elegant

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letter. He's a little more natural, as ye might say, and has so much else to think of he's kind o' forgot himself. He reads the *New York Herald* every day, and can hold an argument on politics or religion. He knows all the points in favor of the protection of home industries, an' has learnt every great fact in American history."

"Except one," said the Pearl of great price.

"What's that?"

"A new thing discovered by H. M. Pearl, Esq., which is singular an' likewise worthy of your attention."

The Pearl paused for a moment while he looked at him. "A stream o' power is rushing over those wires," he went on. "I'll turn it into another channel an' put a brake on it. Then you'll see some actions calculated to produce loud and continued applause."

He put out his lamp and stepped away in the darkness. I heard the turn of a lever and then the room was flooded with light. We gazed at it with a feeling of awe.

"These are sticks of carbon," said he, pointing at the centre of the glow. "When the current strikes the carbon it comes into hard sledding; there's the rub, an' the rub makes heat an' the heat gives light, and the light gives history and feelin's of surprise an' happiness in the breast

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of H. M. Pearl, Esq. Wait until he gets the voltage he needs and he can turn night into day."

"What do you mean by voltage?" I asked.

He took us over to the hose tank that was fastened high in a corner, and turned the faucet. Water came pouring through the hose into a large tub on the floor.

"The voltage is the squirt of the stream, and the size of it is the amperage, and the watts is the hole it would make in the snow. Do you know why so many men use tobacco in this town?"

"No," I answered.

"High voltage and little to do," he went on. "Currents o' power are flowin' into us, but—Lord!—we don't know what to do with it. We have no purpose, no gear, no machinery. So we let it off in all kinds o' folly. Look at the merchants—some of 'em are strong men, but every one has got his belt on a pinwheel. There's twenty of 'em an' work enough for two. The only men in town who are sure of a good living are the undertaker and the carver of epitaphs. We all die, if we don't do anything else."

We turned again to the light and expressed our wonder.

"Lie low an' say nothin'," said Mr. Pearl, as

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he turned the lever. "I'll make 'em roll in their sleep one o' these days. All I need is money for patents an' tools an' material."

"I'll furnish it some day," said the young man.

"An' we'll share the profits," said H. M. Pearl, Esq., as they shook hands.

James Henry McCarthy and I left the shop together. I asked him to go home with me, but he had to leave early next day, and so had taken quarters at the inn.

"How is Miss Fame?" I asked.

"Splendid," was his answer. "Do you suppose she'd care for me now?"

"I should think she would," was my answer.

"But I shall not ask her," said he. "I thought when I got my leg and handsome clothes and some money that I'd be good enough for any one; but when I went to see her the other day, it seemed as if she was a little cooler, if anything."

There was a note of sadness in the voice of Mr. McCarthy. He went on in a moment:

"I conversed with her on the subject of the Republican nominations. I dropped into history and gave a quotation from Shakespeare, just to show her that I was no fool, if I was the son of old Jack McCarthy. I guess I let out about everything that I knew. I just told her

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that I was making money, but I didn't talk shop—you know, gentlemen never do that. By-an'-by she took my hand an' said: 'You're doing finely, James. I'm delighted that you're getting along so well.' It seemed as if that was the worst thing she could have said to me—the same old twaddle—as if I needed a pat on the back. She never asked me to call again."

"Don't let it worry you," I suggested.

He continued: "After all, it isn't legs or clothes or deportment or money or doing as you'd be done by that makes a gentleman—though they help a good deal. You've got to be all right, and then forget it, and it can't be done in a day. I'm like a new pair o' boots—they pinch a little here and there, and have got too much of a squeak in 'em."

STAGE II

WHICH BRINGS CRICKET TO THE STATION OF REMORSE



R. CROCKET played a bass horn which had belonged to his father. He had much to say about "the cause of good music in Heartsdale," and both he and Mr. Boggs were members of its Cornet Band. Therein lay the weakest point in Mr. Crocket's character. He did not lie or use tobacco or strong drink or profanity, but I have thought sometimes that he would have done well to change his sin for one more private and compact, for the old horn cut a swath a mile wide in the silence. It had a part in the string as well as the brass band of the village.

One night, more than a year after my initiation to the shop, there was to be a celebration of the nomination of Lincoln for President and an address by Colonel Remington. Capes and helmets for the musicians had been sent to the

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marble-shop and were stored away in a closet. Swipes and I had discovered them. Now, it should be explained that Swipes regarded his shingle-nail with growing apprehension. He had come to work with a poultice of mustard that morning. I had seen him spitefully withdraw it from his bosom and fling it under his bench. When the Messrs. Crocket had gone home we talked of the shingle-nail, and I observed that he had great respect for the mustard and more confidence in his future. He declared that his pains had been drawn to the outside of his body, and he thought that a safer place for them. He showed me the blister, and as we surveyed the same an evil purpose entered the mind of Swipes, and I regret to say that it overflowed into my own.

The helmets had a partial lining of thin cloth attached to the visor. Beneath the lining of each one we spread a mustard paste where it would afflict the forehead of the player. That done, we ate our suppers and went out to see the crowd. At half-past seven the musicians appeared in front of the Opera-House, and began work at once. Soon I observed that three or four of the players had begun to perspire, and were moving the skin of their foreheads. The clarionet lagged and fell out of time. Mr.

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Crocket lost the run of the score, and went roaring on for a moment and abandoned the chase. Swipes nudged me as the marble-cutter removed his helmet. The others were struggling with their parts.

The clarionet player began to talk to himself. The crowd was laughing at the discords. The Heartsdale Cornet Band suddenly gave up, and, oddly enough, on the first phrase of *Hail Columbia*. Every player uncovered and felt his forehead and began to talk.

Mr. Boggs muttered and seemed to threaten his neighbor.

"I feel as if I'd blown my brains out," said the clarionet player.

"This helmet ought to be spelt with a double l," said Mr. Crocket, as he felt the inside of his head-cover.

Unfortunately, we stayed too long and laughed too much. Mr. Crocket discovered us, and had a stern and suspicious look. We retreated promptly, and heard no more from the band until next morning. We met on the street and entered the shop together.

"Boys," said the Judge, "I've got a present for you."

"What's that?" Swipes inquired.

"Hellmets," said the marble-cutter, spelling

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the word with a double l, after he had spoken it—"a pair of 'em; one for each of you. Try 'em on."

I did not dare refuse the honor, and poor Swipes had the same feeling. The helmets were on our heads in a minute.

"They're becoming," said Mr. Crocket. "I like to see 'em on you."

He pulled them down and fastened them with a strong cord. He seemed to enjoy tying the knot beneath our chins, and drew it tight.

We began our work, and were presently in the tortures of full atonement. Swipes dropped his tools by-and-by, and tried in vain to raise the helmet a little.

"I guess somebody has put some mustard in this helmet," said he, in a loud voice.

"Mustard!" Mr. Crocket exclaimed. "Nobody would be mean enough for that."

"It must be," Swipes persisted.

"I guess you're mistaken," said Mr. Crocket, calmly, as he resumed his work. "Leastways, if there is mustard in 'em, it's only meant for a joke."

Mr. Boggs, who sat in his corner, began to roar.

"It's hard when ye have to invent the joke an' take it, too," said Mr. Crocket.

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Swipes seized the cord and put all his strength upon it.

"You fool, don't you know it's funny?" said the marble-cutter.

Swipes could see no occasion for laughter, and continued to pull the string until it came free.

"Look here, boy, if you can't take your own medicine you'll have to take mine," said Mr. Crocket, sternly. "You may pick up your things an' go; I'm done with you."

Poor Swipes! Things had come to a bad turn for him, and his lips were trembling as he prepared to leave.

The thought of him, then, was more to me than my own torture. He was poor and sorely needed his place. I should not have done, or permitted him to do, an act so foolish as that we had been guilty of.

So I spoke up for him with odd mendacity: "It was my fault, Mr. Crocket. Swipes is not to blame. I put the mustard into those helmets."

It is past finding out—the things a boy will do when he is put to it.

"Oh, you did," said the marble-cutter, "you little-souled, narrer, contracted cuss!"

His eyes seemed to be searching me for other qualities likely to serve his scorn. He added, with a look of sternness: "Boy, you've done a

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great injury to the cause of good music in Heartsdale!"

"I wondered if music had suffered more than I, and, answered, timidly: "It was only meant for a joke."

"Well, the joke is on you," said Mr. Crocket, with a rude look at me. "You are both discharged."

So my second trial in business came to its end, and people began to shake their heads and say that I was a wild boy and would come to no good.

I went to the shop of my old friends, "Pearl & Barker," and told of my trouble. The Pearl had a thoughtful look on his face, and said nothing for a few moments.

"Confound that dog!" he exclaimed, presently, and began to call Mr. Barker. The dog stood up before him.

"You rascal!" the Pearl began, "you'll have to take another dose. I trust that you will soon be a dog, Mr. Barker, an' get over bein' a puppy. Not that I would have you too good—there are no angels in this world, Mr. Barker. But I am moved to suggest that you always show proper respect for age."

Every word that he said to "Mr. Barker" sank into my soul, and made me see how foolish I had been.

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"Those in favor of reform will please say aye," said the Pearl, and Mr. Barker and I both voted loudly. "It seems to be carried—it is carried," the Pearl went on, and then, turning to me, he added: "That dog is getting a good deal of useful knowledge. It may be worth your while to whack up with him."

It was said gently, and yet, somehow, the words fell like a lash. I went home sore with remorse and wrote a letter of apology to Judge Crocket, and fully confessed my folly.

STAGE III

IN WHICH CRICKET PROCEEDS WITH HEAVIER
BAGGAGE



HAT evening there came a rap at our door, and when I opened it who should walk in upon us but Sam—the apprehensive and affectionate Sam.

I presented him to my mother and sister, and he removed his cap and coat and sat down with us. In his Sunday suit and manners Sam was neither cheerful nor communicative. I tried to talk with him of the days we had known together, but he only smiled and shook his head with, now and then, a timid exclamation. When my mother and sister had gone to bed he nudged my leg and whispered:

“Le’ ’s go outdoors.”

We went down the road together, and he turned to me and said:

“I’m up a stump.”

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

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"Deviltry, which is a caution," said he.

"Married life?"

"The Colonel," said Sam.

"Why don't you leave him?"

"Can't," he answered.

"Why not?"

"It's my duty to stan' it, an' I'll have to. Don't have much to do but sleep with the Colonel, an' that's a man's work. It takes an uncommon kind of a man, too. You have to praise his strength an' look at his wounds an' hear him sing an' be shoved around the bedroom an' get your head thumped on the wall an' run for your life when he chases ye. He wants to rassle an' pull fingers about every night. Sometimes he comes home drunk an' sets an' sings like a bird at two o'clock in the morning. I have to get up an' pull his boots off an' let him shove me around. It ain't an easy job, but it's better than some, an' we can't leave Jo alone with him. I've got to put up with it. One night he drove me all over the place with a kind of a spear. I didn't know but he was goin' to stick me with it. By-an'-by I see that he wasn't vicious.

"One evenin' a young feller come there when the Colonel was away, an' behaved himself improper. Jo told Fannie, an' I went an' kicked

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him out o' the house. The Colonel was wild when he heard of it. He wouldn't allow a boy on the place after that. The first one that come he grabbed a sword off the wall an' made for him. The boy run like a scairt deer, an' the Colonel chased him acrost the door-yard an' half-way to the bridge.

"One day the Colonel found a letter from you to Jo. He see that you was in love with her, an' flew mad an' forbid her to write to you, an' I come to tell ye. He won't let her go on the street alone, which is agoin' too fur—altogether. Jo is a lady—don't you forget it. There's only one man that comes to the house, an' he's a friend o' the Colonel. I guess he's a gentleman."

Jo's silence had worried me, and now this attitude of her father filled me with alarm.

"Do you—do you think she cares for me?" I asked.

"You bet I do," he answered, promptly. "There's every sign of it. She promised him that she wouldn't write to you—she had to do it, I guess, an' she wanted me to come an' bring you this."

He paused and gave me a small package.

"The Colonel has had a fortune come to him," my friend went on. "He's goin' to move to the old homestead in Merrifield, an' it ain't over

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twenty mile from here. They'll move in the spring—soon as the snow's off—an' maybe things 'll change by then, so you can come an' see us."

"You write me when to come, and I'll be there if it's a possible thing," was my answer.

Sam questioned me as to my work and pay, and I gave him all the particulars.

"You'll have to get into bigger business," he suggested. "Jo's a lady. I ain't goin' to tell 'em that you're smoothin' rocks. It don't fit ye—someday."

"It's respectable," I said, "and I've been studying every day."

I didn't have the courage to speak of my discharge, and I hoped, too, that Mr. Crocket would soon take me back.

"You've got to be a big gun if you're goin' to fit her, there ain't any two ways about that. You'd better go to school, an', if you need it, I'll lend you a little money."

I thanked the big-hearted fellow, and said that I would consult my mother about it.

"You set down an' write her a letter," said he, "an' I'll see that she gets it."

"But the Colonel—" I began.

"He ain't forbid *you* to write, has he?" Sam

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went on. "You write her a good, long, high-toned letter, such as a lady ought to get. You know how to do it. Don't speak o' the rocks. I've told 'em that you was a gentleman, an' very partic'lar fine in every way, shape, an' manner, an' I guess she b'lieves it. She can marry the best chap in the land if she wants to."

I took his hard hand in mine. "Sam, you're a friend worth having," I said.

"You done me a favor once," he went on, "an' I ain't forgot it, an' never will, an' I'm goin' to help you in any way that I can. Do you remember when I was married? She just took hold o' my bit an' give me a slap on the side, an' walked me up to the neck-yoke where I belonged, an', old boy, I'd go through fire an' water for her."

"I shall not write to Jo at present," I said. "It wouldn't be fair to the Colonel. We must win him over."

We climbed the hanging stair, and I conducted Sam to the spare room.

"Thank God," Sam exclaimed, "I ain't got to hear about battles or the last rose o' summer, an' prob'ly I won't have to jump out an' rassle in the dead o' the night!"

I took the little package Sam had given me to my room, and when it was undone there lay the

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horruck, wrapped in a sheet of paper which contained these words:

I have read the delightful message of the horruck. I send it back, and it will do for a letter.

I sat for hours trying to solve the riddle, and fell asleep in my chair by-and-by. When I awoke the horruck was gone. It had dropped from my hand, no doubt, but, although I looked high and low, I was not able to find it. Had Lizzie McCormick returned in my sleep and taken it away? The thing had left me as mysteriously as it came.

I went to bed and lay awake, hearing the roar of the falling water, and the thought came to me that my own life was like a river now, creeping over the flats. Maybe it would gather power and go on with a rush by-and-by.

STAGE IV

IN WHICH CRICKET COMES TO A TURN IN THE ROAD



MY sister was now in the Heartsdale Academy, and my mother and I had a wholesome pride in her. It was partly for her sake, I must confess to you, that I had been in a marble-shop when my desire would have sent me to school. One of us had to work, and there were many reasons for my sacrifice, and no credit due me. In a dozen houses I knew one might have seen better deeds: mothers working nights, sons and daughters hired for long hours and hard labor, and with no clothes fit for a holiday, so that some one of the children could go to college or the normal school.

My sister had many friends—boys and girls of her own age—who came to visit her. She was a comely girl, and sprightly and light of heart as a bird in the springtime.

At home I had either a book or a biscuit in

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my hand always—so my mother said of me. The supper dishes out of the way, our table was drawn to the fireside and our big lamp glowed upon us until past ten o'clock. What a magic in its light and the silent hours! Far tribes and peoples, the sayings of wise men, immortal tales and poems, the wonders of art and invention, were gathered into the lamplight. Above all, I enjoyed the poets, even the best of them, and committed pages of classic verse, and had burning thoughts of great accomplishment.

We went one night to the Thanksgiving ball at Jones'—I and my sister and some of her school-mates—in a big sleigh. It was, I may say, historic, being the last of its kind in the neighborhood. We were not to see again the careless, old-time frolic. The bass horn, also, was thenceforth banished from like scenes forever. The big fire came, and the telegraph followed in the early spring, and the railroad in the summer, and new brick buildings, including that of the Heartsdale Academy, and many students and working-men. A new editor appeared who began to poke fun at the old fashions. Then came the dress-suit, and novel forms of entertainment, and a big fire-engine. All these things had their effect upon us.

Mr. Crocket appeared at this last of the old-

Cricket Comes to a Turn in the Road

time dances. He sat with the fiddler, and came in, now and then, with a long streak or a sudden splash of bass.

Between dances we heard the bells ringing and hurried out-of-doors. A light rose high in the heavens above Heartsdale. The village was afire, and we made a rush for coats and caps, and our horses were soon speeding along the road.

The Rogers blóck was burning, and what a scene it was! A squad worked on a force-pump at the town well. Men rushed aimlessly about shouting orders mingled with profanity. Others swore back at them with equal emphasis. Every one had a plan of his own. A few were arguing loudly face to face. Mr. Boggs stood looking on with an "I-told-you-so" expression.

Some were bravely at work in the heat passing water-buckets. One was on a roof near the fire playing the hose. They said he was H. M. Pearl. I saw the ladder he had climbed, and the thought came to me that here was my chance at last, and I made my way up it through heat and smoke to the side of my friend. As I fought the falling cinders I wondered if Jo would ever hear of it.

"The fire has got more power than we have!" Pearl shouted to me.

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He worked for a few minutes only when the water gave out. The fire had been forcing us back, and a blast now and then scorched our faces.

"We'll have to adjourn," said Pearl; and we slid down the smoking ladder with blistered hands and faces, and our coats afire.

Heartsdale was more than half destroyed that night, and the marble-shop was in ruins. Pearl had seen the truth—the village had not power enough for its foe. Every day or two some town or city was burning up for that reason.

"The country is like a boy that has outgrown his strength," Pearl said to me. "It needs more power; that stream o' water didn't have squirt enough to drown a bee."

"And better management," I suggested.

"Power and management go hand in hand," said he. "When power comes it will bring brains along with it."

I wrote an account of my adventure on the roof for the weekly *Courier*. It was published over my full name, and not since have I so pleased myself. Did not the editor speak of me as "a polished writer" and "a brave lad"? I read it over again and again, and sent a marked copy to my friends in Summerville.

The *Courier* of that week was full of history.

Cricket Comes to a Turn in the Road

There were lines in it by some unknown writer
which put an end to the despotic sway of the
bass horn. These lines were, in a way, the
Magna Charta of Heartsdale, which thereafter
might have been described as a limited monarchy.
Let me read a moment:

To Jones' tavern, near the ancient wood,
Come young and old from many a neighborhood.
Here comes B. Crocket with his old bass horn,
Its tone less fit for melody than scorn.
They say that thro' its tubes from first to last
A century's caravan of song has passed.
The boys and girls, their mirthful sports begun,
With noisy kisses punctuate the fun.
O careless youths and red-lipped little misses!
O blush that marks the sweet disgrace of kisses!

The fiddler comes, his heart a merry store,
And shouts of welcome greet him at the door.
Tho' fashioned rough and rude the jest he flings,
What power has he to wake the tuneful strings!
The old folks smile and tell how, long ago,
Their feet obeyed the swaying of his bow,
And how the God-sent magic of his art
To thoughts of love inclined the youthful heart,
And shook the bonds of care from aged men
Who, 'neath the spell, returned to youth again.

He raps the fiddle-back as t'were a drum,
The raw recruits of Cupid's army come,
And heeding not the praise his playing wins,
The ebullition of his soul begins.

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The zeal of Crocket, turned to scornful sound,
Pursues the measure like a baying hound;
The sprightly phrases fall like gusts of rain,
The dancers sway like wind-swept fields of grain;
And, midst the storm, to maddening fury stirred,
The thunder of the old bass horn is heard.

STAGE V

IN WHICH CRICKET MOUNTS ONE OF GOD'S HORSES



THOSE days they were stringing wires through the North, and even there human thought had begun to move faster. Now one could fling his words far over the distant hills in a moment. Men gathered in groups and talked of the wonder of it, and looked with awe upon the operator; for had not tidings of far capitals come to him out of the sky, and news of death which had made the strong tremble?

Pearl had been helping to install a new line. For a time—a long time, as it seemed to me—the shop door was locked.

The night of his return I found him overhauling instruments at his bench, but as I came in he dropped his work and his face brightened.

"How goes it?" I asked.

"Swift," he answered. "I've been helping 'em lay a track for lightning. A stream o' power is flashing over the hills to Merrifield this minute.

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Do you see that wire that goes by the window there? Well, it's a nerve out of the brain of the universe, an' we're connected. It makes us a part of the great body of the world, as ye might say.

"There's goin' to be a war between life an' death in this country. In Heartsdale you an' I will lead the new army. Boggs an' Crockett will command the old."

That little shop was for me "the House of the Interpreter," and there I began to get the drift of things.

He gave me a book which contained the Morse alphabet, and taught me to make the letters on a telegraph key, and showed me how it checked the current and so produced the dots and dashes.

"I'll run a wire to your house," he promised, "an' we'll string our thoughts on it an' learn some useful knowledge. I can get a place for you as soon as you can read an' send the current. I never liked the headstone business. It's at the wrong end o' the line. If it was the cradle business, I'd like it better. Life is the thing for you an' me, not death.

"There's four churches and two cemeteries in this little town. Life here has been a kind o' preparation for the grave, an' not much else.

Cricket Mounts One of God's Horses

Death has done most o' the business. It's time we had a change."

I was to help the swift, mysterious current of power to quicken the minds of the people.

Pearl lent me a telegraph key, and I stayed at home with my mother and sister for a few weeks, learning how to sound the letters on it. I went often to Pearl's shop of an evening and talked with him by telegraphy, and he was pleased with my progress, and within a month said I was good enough for any place on the line. We felt his kindness deeply there in the Mill House, and my mother wrote her thanks to him, and begged him to come and sup and spend the evening with us any day.

"My friend and fellow-citizen," said Mr. Pearl; when I saw him again, "nothing would please me better than to sit by your fireside and enjoy all that exalts and embellishes civilized life. But, firstly, I am not decent enough; and, secondly, my clothing is fit only for the 'sacred precinks' o' my own shop, as Mr. Boggs would say; and, thirdly, I have a lot to do an' only sixteen hours a day to do it in."

So he never came to the Mill House, and, although my mother had called twice at his shop to tell her gratitude, she had not been able to find him.

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One day he gave me glad news in this manner:

"How would ye like a job?"

"What kind of a job?" I inquired.

"To jerk lightnin'."

That was his way of describing the work of an operator.

"I'd like it very much."

"You're to take the office in Heartsdale at forty dollars a month on trial," he said.

It staggered me—the prospect of such opulence—and that very day I began my work. I have been lucky and prospered rather handsomely since then, but I have never received a sum so enduring and massive as that which came to me at the end of every month. I always hurried home with the roll of bills and flung it into my mother's lap proudly. Oh, what a lavish hand was mine those days! About the best happiness of all my life was in the few moments of sublime generosity at the month's end when I renounced the money and saw the look in my mother's face and hurried away to my chores. And when I saw the splendor of my sister's hats and gowns, and the neatness of her shoes, and heard people speak of her beauty, I was about as happy as one may be.

I had "jerked lightning" some eight months and had become a figure in the life of Heartsdale,

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for I guided the flying horse of God that sped in and out of the village on its slender highway, and I was looked upon as a kind of sorcerer. Moreover, I—a boy of seventeen—received the princely income of forty dollars a month!

In all this time, although I had written to Jo about the loss of the horruck and my ignorance of its secret and my growing curiosity, no word of her had come to me save a letter from Sam, which told me that Jo was well and hoped those few lines would find me the same.

One afternoon my call came clicking into the sounder with the letters M. F. behind it. I knew that M. F. stood for the office at Merrifield.

The operator said that he would have an important message for me at eight that evening, and asked if I could be at the key to take it. The request was not unusual, for mine was the repeating office at the junction of two lines. I promised to be on hand, and went to the office at eight o'clock.

Soon I got the call and answered it, and these words flashed into the sounder:

"Is this Mr. Heron?"

And I answered, "Yes; who are you?"

"I am the operator at Merrifield, and I have a message for you."

"Well, go ahead," I clicked, impatiently. I

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could see it was a new operator with a rather timid hand. So the message ran:

To Jacob Ezra Heron:

Do you still care to hear from an old friend?

Jo.

I answered that very moment:

To Jo:

I am dying for news of you. Answer.

CRICKET.

Then I asked, "Can you deliver the message to-night?"

"Yes; it has been delivered. I am Jo," the sounder clicked. "This is confidential. See if any one is on the line."

I rang off the calls of the hill circuit and got no answer, and knew we had the wire to ourselves.

"Are you an operator?" I asked.

"Yes. I had to have a talk with you, and so here I am, at last."

"I'd rather talk face to face than with lightning," I said. "Why can't I go and see you?"

"Not now. Wait a little while," she answered.

"Why?"

"Well, it's a long story. There's a young man who came here from New York last summer.

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He's a friend of father's, and knows you. Since they met, my father has asked me not to see or write to you until he could get some information."

"Who is the young man?"

"Mr. Bonaparte Squares."

"Oh, it's Bony Squares!" I clicked. "I know him very well."

"And I know him better than I ever wished to," she went on. "He has tried to make love to me."

"Tried to make love to you!" I exclaimed, with indignation. "I cannot believe it. Your father had better get some information about him. Tell him to write to the postmaster of Heartsdale. Any one here or at Mill Pond could tell him all about Bony. He couldn't marry you!"

There was a pause of two or three seconds, and then the sounder answered, timidly:

"Why?"

"Because I wouldn't let him," I said.

"There's no danger," she answered.

"Except for Bony," I flashed back.

I held my ear close to the sounder for fear of missing a word.

"I am too young to think of marriage."

"Until you have consulted me," I said. "I know things that you must know before then."

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"I will ask father to write to your postmaster about his friend," she continued, as if she thought I had things to tell about Bony.

"Don't let them turn you against me," I urged.

"Don't fear. If I had another horruck I would send it to you."

"I was never able to read the horruck's riddle," I said.

"Oh, you didn't know!" she exclaimed. "I thought you meant it for me."

"I cannot say until I know the message."

"But I wouldn't dare tell you. It's one thing to say it yourself, and another to speak with the horruck. You must find and study it. Good-night! My dear old father is dozing here beside me, and doesn't dream that I am talking to you. I feel guilty, but I was afraid that you would come here."

• "Don't say good-night. I'm not half through talking."

"But we mustn't say everything at once, and he is tired. We'll have another talk. Good-night!"

I closed the office, and started for my home. As I walked alone in the darkness under the singing wires, I got my first broad view of their mission. My sweetheart and I were miles apart, but that

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rushing power on the string of metal had almost removed the distance and helped us to understand each other. Would it not, by-and-by, remove seas and continents and make all the races of one mind, and keep them in peace and good-will?

STAGE VI

MY LAST WEEK ON THE FLYING HORSE



PEARL had invented a water-turbine, a dynamo, and a method of producing light by electricity, and many valuable devices, but had been able to patent only two of them. It is curious how, when there is universal need of a thing, men agree, without ever a word between them, that it shall be done, and nothing is so wonderful as the likeness of their energy and inspiration, as the rhythm of their hammer-strokes, the world over.

Pearl, struggling in the privacy of his little shop, was marching, step by step, with the great inventors, and never even suspected it until his best devices were a matter of record in the Patent Office to the credit of other men.

One evening I found him asleep on his bench. A hand hung over the edge, and a letter had dropped from it. His scarred face had a weary

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look. I turned to leave without disturbing him when he awoke and greeted me.

"Jake, I'm tired," said he, as he rose, yawning, and began to fill his pipe. "I ain't up to the mark."

"What's the matter?"

"Had a fall," he said, passing the letter. "Read that."

I read the news which had disappointed him, and he said:

"Yesterday I was a great man, an' wouldn't have sold out for a million dollars. I've rolled off the lap of luxury an' hit the floor with a bump. Old Aunt Luxury is a long lady, an' no mistake. It's forty feet to her knees, an' a good deal of a tumble. You see before you a melancholy ruin."

"Here," I said, "let me lend you some money. I'll trust you with all I've got."

I had just received my pay, and showed it to him.

"I'm so poor that I wouldn't trust myself," he answered; "an' that bein' so, I wouldn't ask you to trust me."

He left me to get some wood for the fire, and I saw a Bible lying on his desk and put a twenty-dollar bill between its leaves, at the eleventh chapter of Job, and closed it again. I talked

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with him for an hour or so, and asked, when I was leaving, if he had read the Book of Job.

"Not sence I was a boy," he answered.

"Read the eleventh chapter before you go to bed," I suggested, and went away.

Next day he came to my office.

"We're off this evenin', with all our tools and implements," said he. "If it hadn't been for you an' Job we couldn't have got away. You're a strong pair. I read in that chapter, 'Thou shalt forget thy misery and remember it as waters that pass away.' It was the very sermon I needed. My misery is gone. We have given you a vote o' thanks. It was hearty an' unanimous."

He was to take the freight and accommodation which left Heartsdale about eleven o'clock. He did not tell me his destination, but said that I should hear from him by-and-by. I went to the depot with Pearl and Barker, and saw them off.

As I passed the house of the postmaster on my way home, a man in a tall beaver hat came out of its front door and walked hurriedly to a carriage and drove away. It was a cool night in November, and the collar of his overcoat was up around his ears. Something familiar in the step of the man caused me to turn and look at him and remember the incident.

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Three evenings later M. F. was with me on the wire of the hill circuit, deserted by all save us, and I was taking my part in this dialogue:

"I have important news," said Jo.

"What?"

"Father has had a letter from the postmaster of Heartsdale about Mr. Squares. The letter says that he is a man of good character and excellent family."

I saw, then, that mine was a rival who had the will and cunning to win his point. It was strange that I had failed to recognize that swagger of his when I had seen him walk to his carriage the night I passed the postmaster's house.

"It's enough to make lightning laugh," I said. "Your father told him what he was going to do, and Bony drove to Heartsdale on Tuesday night and made friends with the postmaster. He came late in the evening and did not intend to be observed, but I saw him."

"It is too bad," she clicked.

"I can bear it as long as you think well of me," I said. "Suppose I go to Merrifield and have a talk with your father?"

"Not now; there's time enough."

"No, there isn't! You seem to forget that I'm getting along in life."

"Poor boy!—you're almost eighteen!"

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"I'm older than most gentlemen of twenty."

"Why can't you wait?"

"Because I have something to tell you," I wrote.

"To tell me?"

"Yes, and it's too sacred for the wires. I must look into your eyes and hear your answer."

"I wonder what it can be," the receiver clicked. "I shall let you come as soon as I can. I want to see you very, very much. Good-night. Father has come for me. We are going to Washington in a day or two."

At that moment I caught the first words of a thrilling message on the main line. It said: "Fort Sumter has been fired upon. It is the beginning of war."

I took the news to my mother, and declared my wish to go and fight for the North.

"No," she said; "your father gave his life in the war with Mexico. Now my health is gone and you are all that's left to us. You are enlisted in a war with Poverty, and I can't spare you."

She put her arms around me and cried, and I promised to stay at home, if possible, and it seemed a hard fate in spite of my happiness.

I wrote a long letter to the Colonel and confessed my love for his daughter, and begged him

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not to think ill of me without full information as to my character, and referred him to a number of good people.

This brief and suggestive letter came promptly:

DEAR SIR,—As to your character, I have had all the information I desire. I should think better of it if you were to cease communicating with my daughter against my wishes.

It hurt like the blow of a hammer, and I could not think of the Colonel with any degree of charity for a week or more, but, after all, it helped to make a man of me. In the heat of such days a man shapes his character—as the smith his iron that is hot from the forge—and tempers it in cool reflection. Soon I got a letter from Sam that told of the departure of Jo and the Colonel for Washington.

STAGE VII

IN WHICH MR. HERON ARRIVES AT THE SHOP OF
THE HAND-MADE GENTLEMAN



CTOBER had returned, and a letter had come from my friend McCarthy, asking me to visit him. My sister had learned telegraphy at home, and could take and send well enough to do my work at the office. It was arranged, therefore, that she and my mother should close the Mill House and come to town for a week or two, so that she could take my place.

The hand-made gentleman had built his factory in the thriving town of Rushwater, on the Central Railroad. It took a long summer day to get there, for the engine was fed with wood, and we had now and then to load the tender with fuel, corded on the right of way, or drive cattle from the track or water the locomotive or mend a coupling, and had to wait at the junction for trains in equally bad luck.

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

Early in the evening I found my friend McCarthy at the leading hotel in Rushwater, where he boarded.

"Pleased to see you," he said, with dignity, as he shook my hand. "Have you been to supper?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Is there any kind of refreshment I can offer you?"

"Nothing except your company."

He took me to the desk and introduced me as his friend, "Jacob Ezra Heron, Esq., a gentleman from St. Lawrence County."

"Give Mr. Heron the best the house affords, and put it on my bill," he added. I protested, whereupon he touched my arm and said: "You will find, sir, that nobody will take your money in this town. If you will walk with me, I will show you my factory."

I asked for my friend Pearl, and McCarthy said that Pearl and Barker were in New York, and were coming to Rushwater in a day or two. The inventor had worked awhile in the shop, and planned a lot of machines which had hastened the process of manufacture. In June he had drawn his pay and left suddenly for parts unknown.

"I think that he went to the war," said Mr.

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McCarthy; "but he never let on. Said he'd turn up here one of these days, and last week I got a long letter from the old man. Said he'd been sick, and was ready to come back to the shop if I wanted him. Of course, I said come on."

We made our way through dark streets and stopped in front of a building—large for that day and country—on the river shore.

"There it is," he remarked, as we gazed for half a moment at the dim outlines of his building. "I am the most extensive shipper of small freight on the railroad."

We entered the building, and he led me to his office and lighted a lamp. It was a large room, elegantly furnished. The chairs and table were made of mahogany and a soft carpet covered the floor. A large portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte hung on the wall.

Those days the face and story of "The Little Corporal" were a power in the land, and not the most wholesome one, I have thought.

"This is grand," was my remark.

"I am making money," said the hand-made gentleman, "and I propose to look as prosperous as I am. Sal is now the smallest part of my business. I spend twenty thousand a year advertising. My harp has four strings and one tune. Here it is."

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

The hand-made gentleman began to read from a newspaper as follows:

"SPEAKING OF SAL

"Sal is willing; Sal can make the house shine; Sal is a worker—never cross and tired; the best and cheapest hired girl in the country. Cleans silver, glass, metal, and woodwork. Give Sal a chance.

"SAL'S SISTERS

"There are three of them: Sally, the Brick, who cleans knives, forks, pots, and kettles; Sal's Sister, a wonderful laundry soap; also Salome, a clover-scented soap for the toilet. You will find them in all groceries."

"I began little—put it in a paper of five thousand circulation. I found that every dollar that I invested brought me four dollars and thirty-four and a half cents. The second ad. brought me four dollars and thirty-seven cents; the third four dollars and forty-one, and so it grew. I tried all the leading papers, and got the rate of profit and learned the exact value of repetition for each. The return increased as my goods travelled, and people began to talk about 'em. You see, I make something that the people want, and my first problem was to let them know it. That was easy. My next problem was to manufacture within a certain limit of cost. In that Pearl has helped. My next prob-

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lem was to deliver the goods, and that is the greatest problem of all. The railroads are slow and unreliable. They have no more system than a carrier-pigeon. Your freight is transferred until the boxes are worn out; it is side-tracked and lost and forgotten. You see, there are eleven railroads between here and Buffalo. They have been consolidated, but not harmonized. They are like eleven horses in the hands of a poor teamster; they don't pull together. They waste their strength. I complained to Mr. Dean Richmond.

"He said to me, 'We're doing our best, and if you want a better service you'll have to show us how to give it.'

"I gave him a few ideas, and he liked 'em, and what do you suppose happened?"

Mr. McCarthy paused, but I could only shake my head and await his revelation.

"Well, one day the manager called and said the Chairman of the Executive Committee would like to see me," Mr. McCarthy went on. "I pulled up my check-rein a little and went to Albany. It surprised him to see how young I was.

"'Why,' said he, 'you're nothing but a boy!'

"'I'm twenty-three,' I said, 'but they count double. I've done two years' work in every one that I've lived.'

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

"He asked me to dinner; it was grand. I didn't dare eat much—just sat and talked and listened and saw how they behaved themselves at his table. I learnt a number of things."

"What were they?"

"To keep my knife away from my face, for one thing," he answered. "Then a gentleman eats very slowly while he indulges in conversation. He's got to be able to talk about Brignoli and Madame Piccolomini—ain't that a grand name?—and Mrs. Siddons and Lester Wallack, with a word once in a while about the Missouri Compromise. When he gets through he washes the tips of his fingers. One of them told a vulgar story, and it seemed to me that we needed a bath for our minds as well as for our fingers. The chairman liked me, I guess, for he offered me some of his stock at a low price, and said they wanted me on the directory. I went in, and now I'm looking into the whole railroad problem."

He began to unroll a great map which he had been making, and which lay on a broad table. It was sixty feet long, and showed a section of the country some two hundred miles wide from Boston to Chicago.

"I won't bother you with details," he said, "but I have a great plan. It will narrow this

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space between New York and Chicago. It will build up a chain of great cities. It will make a market for goods and quicken their delivery. It will furnish a model for the development of other parts of the republic."

The eyes of the young man glowed with enthusiasm. Then he shook with laughter.

"That's pretty good for the boy with a wooden leg that you met on the road to Canaan, isn't it?" he asked. "You see, the hand-made gentleman is getting along. He's took his mind off himself—partly—and put it on to other things. I don't need so much looking after as I did. I can talk pretty well, and know how to conduct myself in any company. Ye see, practice makes perfect, and I've practised decency for a long time. It's like breathing. Of course, I might be better inside, but outside I'll do for the time being."

"I'd like to hear more of your plan," I suggested.

"It's this, in a nutshell," he said: "I want to combine all the railroads between Boston, New York, and Chicago in one system. Now, if you're going from New York to Chicago, you change at Albany and stay all night; you change again at Syracuse and stay all night, and again at Buffalo, and so on. Of course, you can ride

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

all night, but it wears you out. I want a better road-bed and heavier rails and lighter cars and bigger engines and more power to handle 'em, and a continuous trip. Why shouldn't we travel nights with comfort?"

The hand-made gentleman strode up and down the room and gestured like a man making a speech.

"Five men have twenty times the power of one. Did you ever think of that?" he asked. "When you put two and two together you get about sixteen, but they've got to be one before they can be sixteen. That suggests the value of combination." He paused before me, and added: "Here's the trouble. The idea is bigger'n I am. There's only one man in the world who can carry it out."

"Who is that?" I inquired.

"Vanderbilt," said he. "There's the biggest man in the country. He's made twenty million dollars with his brain. Think of that! He's the Napoleon of this day."

There came a rap at the door, and Mr. McCarthy shouted, "Come in!" and a young man entered with a large blank-book in his hand.

"Mr. Heron, this is Mr. Magillies, a graduate of the commercial college at Poughkeepsie, and a grand penman," said the hand-made gentle-

The Hand-Made Gentleman

man. "He takes down my letters for me, and writes 'em off and sees that they're worded proper. Would you like to hear me answer my correspondence?"

I assured him of my interest, and thereupon the hand-made gentleman dictated many letters with a look and tone of great dignity. Now and then he addressed some delinquent and unscrupulous debtor with great emphasis, and more than once he described the virtues of Sal and Sal's sisters and the clover-scented soap loudly and with gestures suited to the word, so that he reminded me of the picture in my reading-book of a Roman senator addressing the populace.

The young man left us late in the evening with his record of their work.

Then said the hand-made gentleman: "I must have somebody for that position who is more than a mere writing-machine. I want some gentleman who thinks as I do and will stand up for me like a brother. I want you!"

It took me by surprise, and I thanked him and expressed doubt of my fitness.

"I know you, and you know me," he said. "I like you, Mr. Heron, and believe in you; and if you feel the same, let's pull together. I have some big things to do, and you can help me; and I'll double the pay you're getting."

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

I was a rapid writer, and many had praised the neatness and legibility of my penmanship. Then, too, I was rather fond of the hand-made gentleman, and had a great faith in him. But how about my mother and sister and Jo, for both Heartsdale and Merrifield were a long way from Rushwater.

"I'd like to go to the war," I answered, "if my mother will consent."

"The ambition is meritorious," said he. "There can be nothing nobler than the wish to serve your country, but I don't think it needs you. The war will be over in a few weeks. Then there are your mother and sister—don't they need you more than the country does?"

"I'm afraid they do."

"Then you mustn't think of going. Your father gave his life in battle. I think your mother has given the country enough."

I walked up and down the room thinking.

"It's hard work," said Mr. McCarthy. "I sit here until midnight sometimes pounding at the letters. But you'll have a chance to travel and meet men who amount to something, and we'll have a good time together."

"It's only a matter of arranging my affairs," I said to him. "There's my mother and sister."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

"Go home and see if you can get them to move here."

He lighted a long cigar, and sat down with one foot on the desk. The hand-made gentleman had learned to smoke.

"There's another thing—I want to open my heart to you," he said. "I haven't a brother or sister or friend that I can talk to about certain matters. The fact is, I'm in love and engaged to be married."

He paused, and was smoking thoughtfully, as I asked, "To Miss Fame?"

"No; she didn't reciprocate; and maybe it's just as well. I am engaged to a talented actress by the name of Maud Isabel Manning."

He paused again as if to note the effect of this impressive name, and continued: "She's from New York, and beautiful as a dream. Came here with a show, and one morning she walked into the office. Told me that she used my toilet soap, and wanted to see the factory. I showed her about, and fell in love with her. She's a wonder—grand clothes, and knows how to wear 'em; wonderful education, fine talker, sings like a bird, and can make the piano roar. I told her about my false leg and foot and my family—that's worse than a wooden leg—but she doesn't mind, and we're going to be married."

Mr. Heron Arrives at the Shop

I fear that I shared the prejudice of my Puritan fathers against the stage, and was a little taken aback and a bit conservative in my comment.

I think he felt it, for he blushed and began to argue, although a little off the point.

"I think every gentleman ought to marry. There's something about women that makes a man gentle. Old bachelors are about as ugly as a bear with a sore head. I want somebody to work for besides myself. I can't love myself well enough to pay for the struggle. I've got to have somebody who grows happy as I grow rich, or I wouldn't care for money, upon my word I wouldn't. Then the Bible says that men should increase and multiply and replenish the earth."

I wished him all happiness, and tried to put his mind at ease.

"I am forgetting you in talking of myself—you will want to retire," he said, and we closed the office and walked to the inn together.

Next morning some one rapped at my bedroom door. "Who's there?" I demanded.

"A friend and fellow-citizen from St. Lawrence County," was the answer, and I knew it was Pearl.

I opened the door, and there stood my old friend in the familiar goggles and linen duster,

The Hand-Made Gentleman

but with his left sleeve empty and a new scar on the side of his face.

"Mr. Pearl!" I exclaimed; "what's happened to you?"

"Oh, I've just been trimmed up a little," he said, with a smile, as he gave me his hand. "It's nothing. Every tree needs it once in a while. I had too much wood for my sap."

"An accident?" I asked, with tears in my eyes.

"An accident, an' I'm tryin' to forget it," said he. "How are the folks?"

And I saw clearly that he wished me to say no more of his misfortunes. Soon Mr. McCarthy came, and he and the Pearl went to the shop together.

STAGE VIII

IN WHICH YOUNG MR. HERON COMES TO A TURN
IN THE ROAD



AFTER breakfast I found the hand-made gentleman at his factory, and went with him into all its departments, and saw a hundred men and women at work.

"I want you to go and ride behind my trotter with me," said Mr. McCarthy, presently. "Every gentleman has a trotter these days, and bets a little money on him once in a while."

The hand-made gentleman lived at an inn not far from Saratoga, and one could not even enter it without getting a touch of the gay spirit of the summer capital.

As we opened the shop door a drunken wretch in dirty clothing sat on the porch. He rose, clinging to a column, and asked for a dollar.

"Well, uncle, back again, eh?" said the hand-made gentleman. "No more to-day—no more to-day."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

He spoke in a kindly tone, and said to me, as he went on:

"I know it's a disgrace, but I can't help it; and maybe he can't. He's my uncle, and very fond o' me, after all. Followed me down here. Has a spree every little while, and spends all he has earned in a day or two. If I don't give him money he curses me, and goes about the place and runs me down, and does all he can to make me ashamed o' myself. Many a time I've felt like shooting him, but by-and-by I forgive the poor man and lift him out o' the gutter and buy him new clothes and set him to work again. And, do you know, he's been a great help to me, as ye might say? Lord Chesterfield says that a gentleman should forgive injuries, and I guess it's so. He's given me practice in the art of forgiving. It's done me good. I kind o' think, sometimes, that when you help another fellow to get on his feet you do more for yourself than ye do for him."

His trotter, hitched to a light buggy, was waiting at the door of the inn, and we drove away.

"This is a daughter of one of the Morgans," he said, as the mare began to show her stride. "They're breeding for less weight and more power and quicker action. It's a tendency of

Young Mr. Heron at a Turn in the Road

the times. Foot and wheel are beginning to move faster. Everybody is tired of going slow. Mr. Bonner says that he'll show us a horse by-and-by that can trot in 2.15.

"It's a funny thing," he added, after a moment's pause; "my factory kind o' sets the pace for this town. It starts the day and ends it. My whistle sends every one to work, and tells 'em when to knock off, in and out o' the shop. When it sounds in the morning you'll see men who started a little late running to get to their jobs. It's brought new ideas and business methods and a quicker step into the old town."

The hand-made gentleman took me to my train soon after dinner. Pearl was there to see me off.

"I'm glad you're comin' here, Jake," he said, as he shook my hand. "You've always been a great help to me."

"I don't see how," was my answer.

"You've helped me to live," he said, with a sober look. "As soon as you get back you and McCarthy will go down and see Vanderbilt. I've got it all arranged. The medals helped me. It's the only time I ever used 'em. They landed me in the Commodore's office, and I had a talk with him straight from the shoulder. Told him if he went into the transatlantic ferry

The Hand-Made Gentleman

business he'd lose every dollar he had, as Collins had done. He wanted to know what made me think so, an' I told him that he couldn't compete with the English, who had been doing that job for centuries with cheaper labor than we could hire. I explained to him that the business was a growth and not a product; that one might as well try to compete with the forest by planting trees. He agreed with me."

At Heartsdale I found my sister in love with her work, and had a talk with the superintendent in Montreal, who promised to retain her. That evening, as we sat by the fire at home, I got a view of myself that was quite new to me. For a time it filled me with bitterness, but taught me what I had to know, and set me forward in the race a little.

Report of my adventure on the back of the rope-walker had got to Heartsdale—to this day I know not how, although I suspected Bony. It had set idle tongues wagging. A letter to my sister, from one of her friends on a far side of the county, told how she had heard the story, and, of course, I confessed the truth. The harm it did lay in this: It singled me out and stood me up for scrutiny. Follies which would have been forgotten were enlarged and raked together and made to shine forth. The under-

Young Mr. Heron at a Turn in the Road

taker and the carver of epitaphs had marked me for execution, and, assisted by the Heartsdale Cornet Band, had made hopeful progress. They had travelled far, and everywhere people had wished to know about me, and I had been well set off as a conceited, dare-devil sort of a ne'er-do-well who had been concerned in the smuggling business.

I began to understand why Colonel Busby thought so ill of me, and there was only one way to correct his opinion, and my mother made that clear. I must needs go to work and make a character for myself and show it in my conduct—as the hand-made gentleman had done. My way would not be quite like his, but I must be hand-made and upon honor, as he put it. The ready-made article had not stood the wear.

"Perhaps you had better put the pretty girl out of your head for a while," said my mother. "You can keep her in your heart, and that will give you something to work for. But you mustn't give your brain to her. You've got to make a man of yourself, and you need your brain for your work."

"Suppose she marries somebody else," I suggested.

"Then you should not be sorry, because if she loves you she will wait for you."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

That seemed like rather cold philosophy. Its power over me grew as I thought of it, however, and by-and-by it began to have a sustaining force.

"I wish I could go to the war," I remarked, with a sigh, for I longed to be a hero and show my courage, as my father had done.

"That's a wicked business," said my mother, sadly. "I hoped that you would never want to go. I think it would be wise for you to go with Mr. McCarthy. He is fond of you and has good principles, and I presume it is best for you to leave this town; but I can't spare you for the war."

I told them all about my visit to the hand-made gentleman.

"Is he as homely as ever?" my sister asked.

"No, he has grown good-looking," I answered. "He is going to be married." And I told of his engagement.

"My land! I wouldn't marry him if he were the last man in the world!" Sarah exclaimed.

"Why?" was my query.

"He looked and talked so funny—just like a young old man. Then he was so afraid of me—hardly dared to look me in the face. I don't see how he had the courage to ask her."

"I presume she furnished all the courage that was necessary. But you'd be surprised to see

Young Mr. Heron at a Turn in the Road

him. He's handsome, and can walk as well as anybody; and I believe he's going to be a great man."

"I'm sure I wish him well."

"Pearl says that he is a born leader—that the new spirit is in him. I think that girl is lucky."

"I hope that you will stick to him," said my mother. "You see I have a new motto on the wall."

It occupied a prominent place above the mantel—a yard of wisdom in letters of red silk:

STICK TO NOTHING AND NOTHING WILL
STICK TO YOU

It was rather good counsel for a boy, and, in truth, I had begun to share the uneasiness which, beyond doubt, had inspired this gentle reproof.

"I'm glad you thought of that motto, for I want you to stick to me," I suggested. "Mr. Pearl says that as soon as I get my hand in you should come and live with me, both of you."

"Mr. Pearl is a mystery," said my mother. "Sometimes I think I have seen him before, but I cannot place him. The goggles cover his eyes so, and I have heard his voice but once."

I gathered all my clothing and treasures and packed them into my trunk, and when we were

The Hand-Made Gentleman

ready to go to bed my mother gave me the horruck.

"One night I found you asleep in your chair," she said, "and the horruck lay beside you. I saw it was robbing you of rest, and so I put it away."

"The horruck!" I exclaimed. "What can it mean?"

"Your teacher put the coin in your pocket that day before Christmas, years ago. It is one of a number of silver pieces that were marked by an old and kindly man who lived in Heartsdale years ago. They taught his religion, and he used to slip them into the pockets of needy people, who wondered where they came from. We used to call them the ghost riddles."

That night I solved the riddle of the horruck by writing down the alphabet and discarding *x* and choosing letters to the right and left of *m*, the middle letter. So I got this message:

Love is the key of heaven.
I love you.

It made me know that Jo loved me, and I went to bed happier than I had ever been.

It was my last night in the Mill House for many a long year. The cry of the wind in the chimney and the sound of the falling water

Young Mr. Heron at a Turn in the Road

put a new prayer in my heart and a solemn sense of the dearness of my old home, not to be lost in care and toil, in pleasures and palaces.

Next day I returned the horruck to Jo, so as to let her know, plainly, that I loved her also.

STAGE IX

IN WHICH WE MEET THE CAPTAIN OF THE NEW ARMY



GOT to Rushwater late at night, and reported at eight next morning at the factory office. Mr. McCarthy had not arrived, and I went down to Pearl's shop in the basement. My friend sat by a lathe. He rose and embraced me with his one arm. Near us a carpenter was working at a long bench. The Pearl put on an apron and began to heat up his forge.

"How are you getting along here?" I asked.

"I am surprised at my success," he answered. "I have made myself the most hated man in Rushwater. I am abhorred, hissed at, despised. I deprive honest labor of its occupation and grind the faces o' the poor."

"How is that?"

"Well, I have invented a machine that does the work of ten men, and does it better than they

We Meet the Captain of the New Army

did. Now, the ten had to find other jobs, and they didn't like it. Did you ever pull a hen off her perch late in the evening? You know what a noise it makes—all the others get scairt an' begin to holler. Well, you pull a man off his perch and you get the same sort of a ruction. I happen to be the leg-grabber. I didn't mean to do any harm. The purpose o' the factory is to make the goods as cheap as possible, and I was employed to help solve the problem. I've got our wheels on the main shaft, and God's draft-horse is whirlin' 'em."

He took me into the sub-cellar, where a rush of water struck the buckets of a turbine and made it shriek as it sped on its pivot, and the power of a hundred horses went up the shaft.

Soon a boy came down to find me, and said that Mr. McCarthy had arrived. I went to the office at once, and within half an hour had begun my new work. The hand-made gentleman had secured for me a copy of Isaac Pitman's treatise, and I spent all my leisure in the acquisition of "soundhand," or shorthand, as we now call it. I enjoyed my work, and saw at once that I was likely to do some good in it. Mr. McCarthy wished me to spend a few months in a business college, as much in his interest as

The Hand-Made Gentleman

my own, he said to me, and in New York he made arrangements to that end.

"I want you to get the pace of the city," he said to me, "and learn how to score up in proper style. There's a lot of very polished people down here. See how they dress and behave themselves morning, noon, and night. It will be a help to both of us."

We went to the big city that week, I to begin my studies, and he to have a talk with the great Mr. Vanderbilt. The Pearl had said to the hand-made gentleman, when we were leaving Rushwater:

"Don't let him scare you. He's as full o' power as my turbine; has a good deal of a whirl to him. Likes resistance; so does every great force. Used to row a boat all day, an' every day. Fought the wind an' the tide. Stiffened his hands on the oar. Can't straighten 'em to this day. He's fought a thousand difficulties. He'll take you for another an' pitch into ye—like as not. Don't let him scare ye. If he jumps on ye, jump on him; he'll enjoy it, an' begin to respect ye. It's like puttin' a belt on the turbine—you'll take off a bit of his power an' ease him down."

We passed through two offices on our way to that of the Commodore.

We Meet the Captain of the New Army

"Walk right in," said a colored man, who sat near an open door, when Mr. McCarthy had claimed his right to an interview.

We entered, and saw a large, handsome man sitting by a desk on the farther side of a big room. He had a massive head, and white hair and side-whiskers—the latter neatly trimmed—and sat with legs crossed in a big arm-chair. The elegance of his attire impressed me, especially the waistcoat of figured silk, the jewel in his shirt-front, and the spotless white choker. He looked up over his glasses. The skin began to wrinkle a bit around his dark eyes.

"Well, what is it, sonny?" he demanded.

"My name is James Henry McCarthy, of Rushwater, New York," said my friend.

"I don't care what your name is; tell me your business," said Commodore Vanderbilt—for he it was—and he spoke sternly.

"It's a railroad project, referred to by my friend, H. M. Pearl, Esq., in his talk with you."

"My God!" said Mr. Vanderbilt, as he flung a paper on the desk before him. "I've got projects enough now. Will you please let me alone?"

"No, I will not," said the hand-made gentleman, decisively. "I've travelled over two hundred miles to keep an appointment with you, and I insist that you show me proper respect."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

The Commodore changed his tone. "Young man," said he, "I won't talk with you; I can't talk with you. Come to my house to-night. I'll see you at half-past seven."

"Thank you, sir," said the hand-made gentleman as we left the room.

Mr. McCarthy's feelings had been hurt and his confidence began to leave him. He had gone there with a good deal of honest pride in his heart—perhaps, even, a little too much—and I think he would rather I had not seen his embarrassment.

"I am surprised," he said to me as we were going down the stairs together. "He cannot have read the letters of Lord Chesterfield."

"Hasn't had time, probably," I answered.

Our inn was near, and no word passed between us after that until we got to our room. My friend strode the floor in silence, and tears stood in his eyes for a moment. I felt for him, but could think of nothing to say.

"I think one gentleman ought to be careful of the feelings of another," said Mr. McCarthy. "He made me feel like a dog."

"He was out of sorts," I remarked.

"I have learned this," said the hand-made gentleman: "business is war. I see it clearer every day. If you want respect you've got to fight for it."

We Meet the Captain of the New Army

We recovered our composure by-and-by, and spent the rest of the day among tradesmen extending the acquaintance of Sal and the sisters of Sal.

At half-past seven we presented ourselves at the house of the Commodore at 10 Washington Square.

Mr. McCarthy carried his map under his arm, and it was about half the diameter of a piece of stove-pipe.

A servant showed us into a large parlor. We could see Mr. Vanderbilt in a room back of it, sitting by a table in his shirt-sleeves reading a newspaper. We observed him fearfully as he took our cards from the tray—plain written cards they were, save that Mr. McCarthy's had a bird on it, drawn by his secretary. He flung his paper aside and rose—a splendid figure of a man, full chest, broad shoulders, and the six feet of him straight as an arrow—and came slowly into the parlor where we sat.

"Well, sonny, what can I do for you?" he asked.

"I have a map to show you," said Mr. McCarthy.

"Where is it?" was the sharp query of the Commodore.

My friend began to unroll his map, and said, "Here it is."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

The steamboat king was impatient. A sharp exclamation shot from his lips, like the toot of a warning whistle, and he added: "It's bigger'n a bill-board. Unfurl it on the floor there. Run it down into the back parlor."

In a moment Mr. McCarthy had spread his map and begun talking.

"Here's Albany," he said, pointing with his cane. "Here's eleven railroads reaching west to Buffalo, called the Central System. Here are others that go on to Chicago and others that run east to Boston. Here is the steamer line from New York to Albany, closed half the year. Here are two lines of railroad that run north from New York to the capital—the Harlem and the Hudson River. The Harlem road can be bought for less than six cents on the dollar. I want you to buy it."

"What the devil do I want of it?" the Commodore demanded.

"It's the key o' the future, and you need it," said McCarthy. "It's the beginning of a great plan. First buy the Harlem, and then buy the Hudson River road. And do you not see that all these railroads that run east and west up here can't reach the metropolis without your help—especially in the winter when the steamers are out of business? Did you ever

We Meet the Captain of the New Army

see a small boy lead a big bull? It's surprising how easy he does it when he has a ring in the bull's nose."

I remembered the bull at Baker's, and felt the truth of his remark.

The Commodore was now leaning over the map and looking down upon it.

"These two railroads will give you command of the whole situation," my friend continued, "and that's important."

Mr. McCarthy paused for half a moment.

"Go on, go on," said the Commodore; "let's have your argument."

"You can whip 'em all into one system, from New York and Boston to Chicago. You can give us a continuous trip between these cities. You can run freight to any point in the system without rehandling on through cars, to pay each railroad according to the mileage it supplies. You would make it possible for me to sell my goods in Chicago and other distant cities and deliver 'em on time. You would quicken the pace of business. Every factory on the line would double its output in two years. It means growth and a new republic and a string of great cities, and a stream of traffic flowing east and west like a river. There are not so many tons in the St. Lawrence as your wheels would

The Hand-Made Gentleman

carry, and they would roll on like the water-floods, never stopping. They would enrich you beyond the dreams of avarice."

The hand-made gentleman saw the truth clearly, and flashed the torch of his enthusiasm on all sides of it. He shook his cane over the map; his eyes glowed like a prophet's. After all this time, I can but dimly suggest the quaint dignity and the singular power of his appeal. I felt it, and have tried to remember all, since these years have complimented his insight by making history of his dreams. I recall how his ardor thrilled me, and how the Commodore rose from his knee and looked at him.

"Young man," he said, "the dreams of avarice do not bother *me*. I have money enough."

The tone of his voice made it clear to me, even, that Mr. McCarthy's talk had impressed him.

"True," said the hand-made gentleman; "but you have power, composed of brains, money, and public confidence. You're the only man who can do this thing, and it ought to be done. You *must* do it for the sake of the country. Patriotism, and not avarice, will inspire you."

The Commodore smiled.

"Boy, how old are you?" he queried.

"Twenty-three years; but they count double."

"They tell me you've made some money?"

We Meet the Captain of the New Army

"I'm getting along very well."

"Sit down a minute."

A man about thirty years of age had just entered the room. Mr. Vanderbilt turned to him.

"I want you to come over and keep my books," he said, brusquely.

"But, uncle, I'm not a bookkeeper," said the young man. "I don't know how."

"You know enough to take the money that comes in?"

"Yes."

"And add up the expenses?"

"Yes."

"And give me the difference?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's all I want, and any d—— fool could do that. You may begin Monday. Good-night."

The thoughts of the Commodore went straight to their mark and his words followed them.

He put his right hand on the arm of Mr. McCarthy. I saw then how the grip of the oar had stiffened his fingers.

"Young man, I'll think it over," said he. "You go home and don't talk too much. What ye don't say will never do any harm. I make it a rule of my life never to talk of anything I'm going to do until I've done it."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

We left the house and walked slowly in the direction of Broadway.

"He'll do it," said the hand-made gentleman. "He caught my point on the fly. His brain is quick as lightning, and he had the whole thing in a second. He let me go on to make sure that I knew what I was talking about."

"Suppose he does what you want him to, how are you going to make by it?" I asked.

"I'll trust him for that," said Mr. McCarthy. "However, I can take care o' myself. As soon as he makes a move I'll buy stock, that's what I'll do. James Henry McCarthy will not be left behind." After a moment's reflection, he added: "I'm surprised at one thing: he swears like a trooper. And did you see that he came out in a pair of carpet slippers?"

"Yes," I answered.

"He would have shocked Lord Chesterfield," Mr. McCarthy went on. "A gentleman ought to be more careful." He stopped presently and gave me his hand, saying: "I'm going to see Miss Manning; she's the dearest girl in all the world. Leaves on a long tour to-morrow, and I shall spend a week with her on the road. It doesn't seem right for her to be travelling unattended. I want her to be a lady. Perhaps I shall hire some woman to go with her."

STAGE X

WHICH BRINGS MR. HERON TO A HIGH POINT IN
THE ROAD



CONTINUED my studies in New York for a year and a half. My growth, like McCarthy's, had been forced a little by the pressure of hard experience, and I was more serious and more thoughtful and observing, possibly, than boys of my age were apt to be. When I returned to Rushwater I had some knowledge of banking and bookkeeping, and the power and purpose of corporations, and, indeed, of the whole theory of business—not so much as I thought I had, of course, for no man has struck the right balance in the big ledger of his own mind until it is nearly full. He is so apt to overcredit himself and forget some of the charges. Well, in spite of that, I had things on the right side, and, among other items, my phonography, for my hand could follow the tongues of the orators, and that was a pace

The Hand-Made Gentleman

for you! Those days New York was full of prophets. I went to hear them for the sake of practice, and gathered reams of florid eloquence.

It is curious how I clung to that boy love in my heart. My sister had gone to Merrifield to visit a school friend, and met Jo, since when they had written letters to each other. So all my best news came roundabout, and was never too much, but always enough to sustain my passion.

There were perils in the big city for one of my age without a home, but this thing in my heart gave me good counsel. Whatever others may have thought of her, to me she was like Pallas to the Greek—a divinity—and I had to be worthy of her. I had met good people, and seen a bit of the best life of the city through my mother's uncle, Mr. Schermerhorn, and gathered knowledge of the amenities for my friend McCarthy.

Once again I had seen Mr. Vanderbilt when his famous Mountain Gal was to race near Coney Island. I took the horse-cars in Brooklyn, and went as far as they would carry me on my way to the track, and tramped down the road while others raced along in every kind of vehicle. It was after the hour, and the crowd had passed me, and I had not far to go, when along came

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the Commodore in his gig. I raised my hat to him, and he pulled up beside me.

"Have a ride, boy?" he asked.

I thanked him and got in, and away we sped.

"Going to the race?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. I want to see your horse go."

"You know me?"

"Yes. You remember the big map?"

"Oh, I see you was somebody I knew. Great boy—that young Irishman. He'll make his mark. Have you a ticket?"

"No," I said.

"Never mind; I'll fix it."

So I entered with him in his gig, and he took me to the club-house and found a seat for me.

Next day I returned to my home in Heartsdale, and hoped while there to go to Merrifield and see the Colonel and Jo. I was much taken down to learn from my sister that they had sailed for Liverpool the day before.

I was ready for my career at Rushwater, and my mother and sister were going to live with me in a snug house which the hand-made gentleman had built and furnished for us.

I called upon Judge Crocket and presented my compliments. Mr. Boggs and the soldiers were playing old sledge in a corner. All eyes were turned upon me. The Judge asked how I was

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getting along, and greeted my answer with a little smile of incredulity. His smiles at time had the gleam of steel and cut like a chisel; but I wanted to make friends, and said:

"I have thought it over, and made up my mind that you were very kind to me."

"Oh, you have!" he answered, as if caring little what I thought.

Now I had meant to be polite, but his indifference stung me, and I added:

"Yes; you sent me out of bad business and worse company. I am grateful. You men who live in the shadow of death don't know how pleasant the world is. I want to thank you."

Judge Crocket began to carve the air with his chisel. "You're a scamp, sir," he declared. "You wrote that 'scurrilious' poem about the dance at Jones'. It was an outrage—an outrage!"

"I deserve no such credit," was my answer. "I did not write the poem, and, if it hurt your feelings, I am glad that I know nothing of its authorship. But you have no right to complain. For years you have been cutting people to the bone with sharp criticism. You seem to think well of no one. You have said things about me that were undeserved and scandalous."

The Judge had resumed his cutting, and the wrinkles in his face had deepened, but he made

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no answer. Mr. Boggs nudged his neighbor and looked up at me with a smile, in which amusement was mingled with contempt.

I left the shop, and found Swipes and some of our old companions waiting for me outside the door. Swipes had grown so that I scarcely knew him.

"How are you and the shingle-nail?" I asked.

"The nail an' I have gone out of partnership," he answered. "I don't worry any more about that nail. I used to lie awake nights thinking of it. By-and-by I forgot it, and was all right. I drew the nail out o' my mind, as ye might say, and have had no more trouble."

Swipes had gone into deeper water than he knew. From that moment I began to draw the shingle-nails out of my own mind; the opposition of Boggs and Crocket was, after all, a little matter. What kind of man was I in *fact*?—there was the important thing, not what they thought of me. Death and his angels were ever striving to pull one down. I would not let them halt or baffle me for a moment. I had my belt on the great engine of life, as Pearl had told me, and I knew it would whirl me on.

So from that day I permitted little things to worry me no longer, but gave my strength wholly to greater issues. I forgot the shingle-nails.

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The boys had heard of my adventure on the high rope, and now regarded me with a kind of awe, and put many queries. I answered them with a sense of sadness and humility that there was nothing else in my career which they thought it worth while to ask about.

On the whole, I was not sorry to leave the village of Heartsdale. It was greatly changed. The burned area was pretty well covered with new buildings. One man had left a black, dirty, charred ruin flush with the sidewalk in the very centre of the main street, and refused either to remove it or permit it to be removed. He blamed the firemen and the pump and everybody in the village for the loss of his store, and there stood the ruin for a punishment—a black memorial of his blacker scorn.

New faces were on every side. A steam-mill had come, and morning, noon, and night one could hear the peal of its whistle. The first waves of power had reached the little town. Instead of being content with its small farmer-traffic, the town itself had become a producer, and was shipping doors and blinds and sashes, and boats and canoes, and rough and dressed lumber to distant places. A new act was beginning in the great drama of the republic.

When we started for Rushwater there were

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at least a score of the friends and schoolmates of my sister who went to the station for a last word with us. There was not a prettier miss in the north country than that very sister of mine—save Jo, the incomparable Jo!

The hand-made gentleman met us at the depot in Rushwater, and drove us to our new home with a fine coach and pair.

“What a change!” said my sister, when he had left us for the night. “He has grown positively handsome and is a real gentleman.”

Success and observation and right thinking, above all, had distinguished the man—James Henry McCarthy. Something—was it the tireless upreach of his thought?—had straightened his figure and raised his chin a little, and covered him with a strong, calm dignity, as with a robe of higher office, and tuned his voice for new appeals, so that even I was surprised and got a little touch of awe, and felt my smallness when I took his hand. I spoke of these things and of my feeling.

“Well,” said my mother, “the only real gentleman is ‘hand-made,’ as he puts it. After all, one cannot inherit much of that. One has to begin, soon or late, and build slowly and patiently, putting one stone on another, just as Mr. McCarthy has done.”



Book Three

**In which the Youth and the Hand-Made
Gentleman See and Do Some
Wonderful Things**



CHAPTER I

THE SINGULAR BEGINNING OF A NEW CAREER



EARLY next morning Mr. McCarthy came and took me for a drive. He was a new man, quiet, serious, and inclined to let me do the talking. I thought of him no more as the hand-made gentleman. Just the one word was enough for him now.

Something had gone wrong with him, and I wondered what it might be. I hoped he would speak of the love-affair. He put many questions, and said, by-and-by:

"I'm glad you've come, for the railroad work takes half my time, and poor Sal is neglected. I want you to tackle Sal. I'm going to organize a stock company for Sal, and make you president perhaps, and give all my time to larger things. The army of steam-power is going to need help at Albany, and I may try for a seat in the legislature. But you know Horace Bulger runs the county, and I won't buy honor. I've got to

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beat him. I thought it would be easy, with three hundred voters in my shop, but the first I knew Bulger had stirred them up. They're growling about our machines, and the trouble will last until convention time, you see. He did it to block my game. If I want to go I've got to settle with him." After a moment of silence, he added: "There's a lot for you to do. I want you to begin by advertising the hygienic value of a bath every day. Keep dingling on the idea that soap and civilization go hand in hand. Let it be understood that a clean mind can only live in a clean body, that decency begins with soap. Let us assail the great army of the unwashed, and increase the respect of the people for Salome, the clover-scented sister of Sal."

The shop had doubled its size, and now covered half an acre of the river shore.

I found Pearl and Barker in a larger basement shop. The gray-haired man put his one arm around me and held me close for half a moment, and said not a word. Then he sat down and raised his goggles and wiped his eyes, and I remember that I felt a little ashamed of my own weakness.

"Oh, Mr. Barker!" he called, when the goggles were in place again.

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Mr. Barker took his stand in the old familiar attitude of receiver for the firm.

"What do we say to the gentleman from New York, and late of St. Lawrence County?"

The dog barked almost gleefully.

"You are right, Mr. Barker. We are delighted to see him. We bid him welcome to the growing village of Rushwater. We do, indeed."

He led me to the turbine.

"See," he said, "it runs smoother and makes less noise; it has got dignity; it knows how to handle its power."

I could not help thinking that it was, in a way, like McCarthy himself.

Well, I had no sooner entered the stirring life of the shop at Rushwater than things began to happen. One day Mr. Horace Bulger came into the office, where I sat alone with the gentleman. The power of Mr. Bulger was universally known and respected. He ran the politics of the county. For years no citizen within its boundaries had been elected to office without his consent. He was born poor; he had neither toiled nor spun; he never seemed to want anything for himself, but, somehow, Mr. Bulger had prospered, and very handsomely, as things went.

"I have something to say to you," said Mr. Bulger, addressing the hand-made gentleman.

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"Say it," said the latter.

"Perhaps it had better be confidential."

"Go right ahead. This young man is my private secretary, and knows all my business. If I should sell my soul, he'd have to know the price."

Mr. Bulger hesitated.

"I do not need to say that your confidence will be respected by both of us," my friend added.

"Mr. McCarthy," said the wily Bulger, as he dropped into a chair, "I think you are likely to be nominated by the Republicans of our district for the Assembly."

"You are too confident, Mr. Bulger," said the hand-made gentleman. "I will bet you three thousand dollars that I am not nominated and elected this year."

Those old models of gentlemanhood, after which Mr. McCarthy had fashioned himself, saw no harm in a wager.

The politician thought a moment and smiled. Then said he:

"I will take the bet, and am ready to post the money."

"Your check is good enough," Mr. McCarthy answered.

"No checks," said the other. "Let's make it money."

The Singular Beginning of a New Career

"Who shall be the stake-holder?" was the inquiry of my friend.

"Your secretary—if you will vouch for him."

"I'd trust my life with him," said the hand-made gentleman.

So the money was put into my hands, to be deposited to my credit in Mr. Bulger's bank.

"One thing I have to ask," Mr. McCarthy added: "You know I have no secrets, and don't want any. I'm not ashamed of this bet, and I hope you're not."

"Not a bit," said Mr. Bulger.

"All right then; we've got nothing to cover up."

"Not a thing."

"Good! I want everything aboveboard. We can either of us tell the whole truth if it should seem necessary."

When Mr. Bulger had left us, I turned to my friend McCarthy and said:

"You're sure to be elected now."

"Of course I am," said the gentleman. "But he's got some work on his hands. I cannot understand his coming here. To begin with, he'll have to settle that strike for me, and it may not be so easy. He's got to unravel a lot of his own knitting or pay the forfeit. I don't think he knows what it means."

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We both laughed for a moment, after which he went on:

"It's his funeral—not mine. A gentleman can bet, but he could not make a bargain for a seat in the legislature, and it's undignified and immoral to pay for votes. Bulger has got to do the work."

I regret sometimes that Mr. McCarthy had not then the surer light that came in due time. He was very human, so do not expect too much of him.

That day our evening paper contained this announcement:

VANDERBILT OWNS THE HARLEM ROAD — WILL
THE STEAMBOAT KING LEAD THE IRON
HORSE CAVALRY IN ITS WESTWARD
CHARGE?

"Now I understand," said the hand-made gentleman; "Bulger was acting under orders when he came here to-day."

"Do you mean to tell me that Vanderbilt controls the Republican party?" I asked.

"He wants honest and progressive men in the legislature, and has a hand in many a caucus," said McCarthy. "He's got to do it or have a lot of pirates to reckon with when he goes up to Albany for the legislation he needs. Any man likely to block the wheels of progress is killed in the conventions, if not before. He's paving the way for a new era."

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH PEARL'S OLD MARE BEGINS TO HURRY
US ALONG



PEARL had learned how to use and control the great draft-horse of the river. At a touch of his finger a belt moved, and up went the push of the falling waters into a thousand feet of shafting. Other levers could divide this stream of power into some forty currents guided by leathern belts to the labor-saving devices of my able friend. These latter had doubled the capacity of the shop without increasing its working force, and soon the machines which made "Sal and Sal's Sisters" began to be regarded as the rivals—and even as the enemies—of labor.

The candidacy of Mr. McCarthy had been announced; the caucuses were coming on; no sign of opposition had developed.

One morning the gentleman came in with important news.

"They will strike to-morrow," he said. "I

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have learned the whole plot. Gaffney, that little red-headed Irishman who is the boss of the wrapping-room, is at the bottom of it. They had a secret session last night and made him spokesman. He will come here to-morrow morning and ask me to put out the machines. If I refuse, they will quit and fight me."

He sat, thoughtfully, tapping with his pencil. In half a moment he said:

"That man Gaffney has quite a head on him. I think I'll promote the fellow."

"Promote him!" I exclaimed.

"Yes; I never discharge anybody. I promote people if it becomes necessary to get rid of them."

He tapped his call-bell, and said to the errand boy, "Ask Mr. Gaffney to come here."

Gaffney arrived presently, a bit embarrassed.

"Sit down a moment," said Mr. McCarthy. "I said when you came here that I would keep an eye on you, and I've done it. I'm satisfied that you're too talented for your position. I'm going to send you to the shop in Troy, where our machines are made, and keep you there until you've learned all about them. Then I'll try you as superintendent, at a larger salary, and a 5-per-cent. interest in the profits. If you 'tend to business you'll make a fortune."

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Gaffney was dumb with surprise. His face turned red; his hands trembled; he voiced his gratitude in a stammered sentence.

"I'm glad to do it," said McCarthy. "Go back to your work, and be ready to leave Monday morning."

Gaffney retired, and my friend sent for another man.

"This is a different kind of chap," said the gentleman. "He's a sore on the body of poor Sal, and we'll remove him by a gentle sort of surgery."

His name was Hinkley, and presently in he came.

"Hinkley," said my friend, "I'm going to promote you. To-morrow you may go to the plant at Amadam. You shall have a 3-per-cent. interest in the profits of that enterprise. Go ahead and make them as big as you can."

Hinkley returned to his bench in a grateful spirit, although a bit puzzled, as I saw by the look of his face.

When we were alone, McCarthy turned with a smile and said:

"You see, the plant at Amadam is a reformatory for the promoted. Of course, it doesn't make any money, and as soon as it begins to lose a hundred dollars a month I shall stop it,

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and they'll be out in the cold world. I'm fair with them; they have a chance to make some profit if they will and keep their jobs. It's their funeral, not mine. If any man improves there, and develops talent and good-will, I promote him back to the home shop. If any one is unmanageable, I promote him to the soap-grease department at Buffalo. There I have a hard boss, and the probationer will do one of two things—reform or resign. He either improves or discharges himself. I never discharge any one." After a moment's pause, he went on: "Now we'll send for Mr. Horace Bulger and give him some work to do. He should be able to stop the strike now. We've done him a great favor."

The Honorable Bulger came soon, and promptly the hand-made gentleman gave him a word of advice.

"You had better stop this trouble in my factory, if you can," said he.

"What trouble?"

"The trouble you started some time ago; it's your trouble now. The men have decided to strike to-morrow. You'll have to make peace, or I'm defeated and you lose your money."

Mr. Bulger rose with a worried look.

"Don't say a word to them," he whispered; "let me do the talking."

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Without further reply, Mr. Bulger hurried into the factory. For the first time in his life this wily, easy-going gentleman had work to do, and it gave him no rest. Gaffney helped him, and he kept the men with us, although they had gone so far in the way of discontent, upon which he himself had led them, that Mr. Bulger was in sore trouble.

Old and new forces had begun a conflict which was to last for half a century. Hand labor *versus* machines became an issue in the campaign of James Henry McCarthy, and nearly defeated him. He went to New York and remained there until Bulger had struggled up to the convention with a majority of two. When the nomination was secure he told us about one of the winning votes.

It had been a stubborn fight in the town of Edgewood. The night before the caucus he knew that he needed one vote to secure his delegate. A politician of the name of Barber had worked against him, and spent a good deal of money. Late in the evening he hired a horse and drove to the house of a certain farmer who lived about a mile from the village. He had learned that Barber had bought the vote of this man. The farmer let him in.

"I want to talk with you and your wife about an important matter," said he.

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Soon they both sat beside him.

"You are supposed to be respectable people," said Bulger. "You have some property and two children, and of course you'd like to have a good name."

The farmer agreed.

"Well, now, I've come here to inform you that Barber got drunk this evening, and has been telling down there at the hotel that he had bought your vote."

"Then don't you vote for his candidate," said the wife to her husband. "If you do, everybody will believe the story."

"And he voted for our delegate," said Bulger, as he turned to the hand-made gentleman. "That's the kind of a fight I've had on my hands, but now the worst is over."

"Not yet," said McCarthy. "There's the shame of such a victory, and that will fall upon me. I don't like it."

"Oh, you're one o' them high-moral cusses!" said Mr. Bulger, with a look of contempt.

Then said the hand-made gentleman: "My morals are just high enough to believe in fair play."

"Well, you don't have to answer for my sins," Mr. Bulger retorted.

"I'm not sure of that."

"You're in the game of politics, young man,"

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Bulger went on. "You've got to take it as it is or keep out. It's as tricky and full o' bluff as a game o' poker. I'd like to see you make it better. You'll have a chance by-and-by; go ahead and see what you can do."

Well, there was some mud-flinging in the campaign, and Mr. McCarthy was blamed for the sins of Bulger, and came to his honors by-and-by with tempered enthusiasm and increased humility. A certain newspaper had opposed him with cruel vindictiveness. It told of his humble origin, and called him "Pegleg McCarthy" and "the son of a washwoman" and "a man of vaulting and unwarranted ambitions." These were the poisoned arrows of a rude time, and they scarred the soul of McCarthy and helped to make him a fighter.

Meanwhile I sat one evening in the shop with Pearl and Barker.

"Mack is a great boy," said my old friend. "Sat here until midnight the other evening; said he hated politics, and wished he was out of it. I called Barker up, and give him a talkin' to right then and there."

"How about the talented young lady?" I inquired.

"I don't believe he'll marry her. He ain't so green as he used to be—"

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He was interrupted by a rap at the basement door. I opened it, and four masked men crowded over its threshold. I grappled with their leader, for the truth had flashed upon me—they were after Pearl, "the machine man." I fought like a tiger, and stopped them for a second there by the doorway, and then they stopped me. One of them threw a piece of iron and struck me in the face with it; but I had saved my friend, with the help of Mr. Barker, who had seized one by the seat of his trousers. I came to in a dash of spray. A man had fallen across my legs and another lay near me. I saw a shaft of water strike a third and lift him off his feet and hurl him through the open doorway. He went like a leaf in the wind. A dash of spray put out the lamp. I scrambled to my feet, and stood to my ankles in water. I could hear the turbine purring like a great cat. In a second Pearl's electric lamp, that hung from the ceiling, began to glow. He stood by the pen-stock with a big iron nozzle in his hand. Two men lay near me. The water had struck like a sand-bag, and knocked the breath out of them. They had come to, and begun making for the open door on their hands and knees.

"Good-night, boys," said the Pearl, pleasantly; "call again."

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He closed the door and bolted it, and took his pistol from a closet and turned off the light.

"Come on," he whispered, "we've got to make for a doctor."

At precisely that moment I began to feel the pain in my nose and the warmth of my own blood on its way to the floor. We hurried up a stairway, and through the long hall, and out of the front door.

"Thanks, old boy," Pearl said, warmly, as he took my arm in his, "you have won further promotion for meritorious conduct. I make you my hero as well as my friend."

"I did little," was my answer; "but I should like to know what it was that you did to them."

"It was the ol' mare o' the river," said Pearl. "I had her fixed so I could cut her loose. She just h'isted up her hind legs an' threw 'em into every corner o' the shop. An' they hit hard. Ye see, I was expectin' 'em. Had a spout rigged at the bottom o' the pen-stock with a double j'int in the neck of it. The ol' mare jumped through it an' raised"—he checked himself, and added—"everything in reach."

My nose had been badly cut and broken, and I was a month in the Albany hospital undergoing repairs, and came out with this battered visage. I wept when I saw myself in the mirror.

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It was not so very bad, you see, after all, but that day I thought it bad enough to make a dog bark at me. I gave up all thought of marriage, but—yes, oh yes, dear child, I loved her more than ever.

I remember the day that Pearl came down to cheer me up. He put his hand on my head and whispered:

“Don’t worry about that, boy. It’s your medal of honor, and you can’t hide it under your vest, either.”

We learned that the men had worse injuries, and before a day had passed their names were known, and within a week they were promoted to the grease department. They had planned to tar and feather my friend and carry him out of the village on a fence-rail, and Pearl and his “old mare” had exposed and kicked them out of favor in their own ranks. The working-men turned to McCarthy, and always stood by him after that.

CHAPTER III

THE GENTLEMAN DISCOVERS A NEW KIND OF POWER



REMAINED at Rushwater to run the shop while McCarthy was beginning his legislative career. I was going about a good deal looking after branches in Chicago and New York. The hand-made gentleman was at home and doing something for Sal in the intervals of adjournment, but I saw little of him. Two or three times in my absence he called to see my mother and sister.

When I had returned from a long journey, one evening Sarah said to me:

"I have seen that girl."

"What girl?"

"Mr. McCarthy's girl—the one you say he loves."

"Has she been here?"

"Yes; and I don't like her."

"Why?"

The Hand-Made Gentleman

"The fact is, we've got to have a new kind of iron. Our rails are breaking down. They can't stand up under heavy loads and big engines. The country will have to poke along at twenty miles an hour until we can get something better. On our way we'll stop in New York and see the Commodore."

I began to think of my mother and sister, who had come to live with me in Rushwater. He seemed to read my thoughts, for he added:

"You can take the folks to Albany if you like. They've never seen much of city life; I'm sure they'd like it; and, say, do you—do you suppose they'd be willing to put up with me for a boarder?"

"I'm sure they'd be glad to have you," I said.

"Don't tell 'em that I spoke of it, but just propose the thing and see what they say. You can be frank with me. We ought to know each other well enough for that. I'm afraid you're just a little too much inclined to please me."

"Not without provocation," I remarked, having great respect for him.

"But I want you to find fault with me," he went on; "I'm far from perfect. Just remember that I'm trying to improve myself. All that I know I picked up here and there. If you hear me say anything that doesn't sound right, I

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want you to tell me. I want you to look over me a little every day, and tell me if I dress and act as a gentleman ought to. You've seen how people do in New York."

"I've often thought that I would speak to you about the color of your neckties," I suggested, mildly. "You seem to like red as well as I do, but it is not the best form."

He turned, blushing, and took from his pocket a twenty-dollar bill, and said: "I'm glad you spoke of it. Take this and go and get me some good ties in the morning. If you see anything that you think I need, buy it; my credit is good here. But there's another matter—my soul is feeling a bit shabby and ashamed of itself; it needs a little advice."

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Well, I've found a greater power than the push of steam or water or electricity. It can put them all out of business—it could stop every wheel in the world."

He paused, and I looked into his eyes and guessed his meaning.

"It is love, and it has stopped me," he went on—"stopped me on the brink of a precipice. I don't know what to do. I wish I were somebody—anybody but the low-bred, common, Pegleg McCarthy that I am."

The Hand-Made Gentleman

His voice began to tremble a bit, and he left his chair and walked up and down the room in silence.

"Don't throw mud on yourself," I protested. "There are plenty of us who would like to be that same McCarthy."

"I'm not so bad," he went on. "The trouble is, I have the pride of a king in me and the blood of a hodman. But I may do something by-and-by. I've been reading about Lincoln. He was a man of humble birth and limited education. It gave me hope for myself."

"What's the trouble?" I asked again.

"I have met the woman I love, and she is not Miss Manning," he continued. "She is a lady—the sweetest, dearest lady in the land, and so far above me that we could never be man and wife. But I love her. God! she is more to me than all the rest of the world. I have nothing in me but the thought of her."

He turned away and fussed with the papers on his desk.

"I care no more for business," he continued, "and the honors I had hoped for are nothing to me now. All my plans are like the withered stems of a garden sticking out of the snow."

He strode up and down the room and stopped before me, and something out of the depths of

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his heart shone in his countenance and lifted him to greatness, it seemed to me, so that he saw his way clearly.

"I shall do my work," he said, solemnly. "I will do what my God tells me to do. I will try to be good enough for her—that is something—and I shall marry Miss Manning."

"Do you think you ought to do that?" I asked.

"I have promised, and a gentleman keeps his word unless—unless there's some good reason why he shouldn't."

"I have sometimes thought that she was not the woman for you," I suggested.

"So have I. Poor girl! We're quick to judge, and not any of us are perfect. My life isn't much; I'm glad to give it for a principle."

"I know how you feel," I said, thinking of my own troubles. "But then it may be that she doesn't care for you."

"Well, I've got to believe her, haven't I?"

"Yes—if—if she's a lady," was my answer.

"Well, you see, I'm a pretty common fellow myself, and I must treat other people as I would have them treat me. Miss Manning is a good-hearted girl; she's had bad luck—the company stranded, and all that. In the morning I wish you to go to New York and find her. She lives at the Waverly Place Hotel. I'll give you a

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check signed in blank. Get a schedule of her debts, if possible; satisfy yourself as to the sum she really needs if it takes a week, and make the check for any amount you think best. When you're ready, wire me, and I'll meet you and we'll go on to Pittsburg. One moment," he added, as I was leaving him, "you will be apt to find her at home about six. If she isn't there, her maid will tell you where she is, and you might look her up."

It was a curious mission—the kind of duty one would rarely delegate to another. Yet, somehow, it was characteristic of the gentleman to be frank and businesslike, even in a matter of benevolence. But how was I to learn what sum "she really needed"?

I took a train in the morning, and about six that afternoon called at the rooms of Miss Manning, in Waverly Place. She had gone to dine at Delmonico's, the maid told me.

Delmonico's! I had heard of the famous café and restaurant, the resort of the rich and the high-born, where, it was soberly affirmed, one could pay, and many had paid, as much as ten dollars for a dinner. I had plenty of money, and a feeling of opulence, too, and decided that I would go and have a look at the place and the people and the food, for I had no notion that I

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should like the taste of it. So I put on my best clothes, and walked down Broadway, and entered as boldly as if I had been there every day of my life. A young man of the name of Gillette, whom I remembered meeting one day at a tea-party at Mrs. Schermerhorn's, rose from one of the tables and greeted me. My memory was better than his, for I recollect that he addressed me as "Mr. Horn," and talked so volubly that he gave me no opportunity of correcting him. He had heard of my injuries, and assured me of his sorrow, and asked me to join his dinner-party at a large, round table.

"I really need you, old man," he whispered. "You see, one of my friends has disappointed me, and there's an empty chair."

I accepted his kindness, and he presented me as "Mr. Horn," and as "my old friend, Mr. Horn," so what could I do but accept the name and make the best of it. Well, to my great surprise, one of the ladies at the table was Miss Manning herself, and a very handsome girl she was. I was about to say that I knew a friend of hers when it occurred to me that if I did I should have to explain that my name was Heron and not Horn, and so embarrass the friendly Mr. Gillette. I said nothing, therefore, and was soon glad of my forbearance.

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All were drinking freely save myself, and by-and-by the conversation grew oddly intimate and the manners most unrestrained. Miss Manning held the hand of the young man who sat beside her, and spoke freely of her "angel" up the State, who was going to marry her; and I could not hold up my head or heart in the midst of it, and excused myself and left them with a kind of world-sickness in me—the first touch of it that I had known. Yet, as the friend of a noble gentleman, I thanked God for it all, and the great soul of McCarthy himself could not have felt a keener pity.

I telegraphed to my friend that I had finished my work, and next evening he met me at the St. Nicholas. He came into my room and pressed my hand eagerly, and asked:

"What's new?"

"Nothing," I said; "it's a rather old story."

"You saw Miss Manning?"

"Yes."

"And gave her the check?"

"No; I return the check to you," I said, and briefly gave my reasons.

"Heron, most any one can obey orders, but the man who knows enough to disobey them to save a principal is above price," he said, as he shook my hand again. "I couldn't say a word

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of my suspicions, for, you know, one has to be careful not to injure a lady. For fear of that I couldn't bring myself to engage a detective to watch her—it seemed so brutal and ruthless and cold-blooded.”

He turned away, and for a moment neither spoke.

“I was sure that you would know how to do the errand,” he added.

Mr. McCarthy drew a letter from his pocket and flung it on the table, and said:

“You will understand me when you have read that.”

I drew the letter from the envelope, and read as follows:

MR. MCCARTHY,—You are being deceived, and I write to warn you about Miss Manning. If you or any friend of yours would go to her hotel unexpected, almost any evening about dinner-time, you could learn where to find her. I could tell you many things, but you might as well learn them for yourself.

A WELL-WISHER.

“I think it was written by her maid,” said McCarthy, as I returned the letter. “But come, come, we are due at the Commodore’s.”

We hurried away, and as we left the inn I could not help thinking how cleverly he had planned my errand of good-will.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH WE MEET TWO GREAT MEN



WE took an omnibus, and were presently in the big house on Washington Square.

"Hello, young man!" said the Commodore, as he took the hand of McCarthy. "Going out to the stable to look at a sick horse. Come along!"

He donned his overcoat, which had a collar of gray fur of about the shade of his hair, and it put a wonderful finish on him. I never saw in all my life a better figure of a man.

We went with him to a large stable back of the house. I recall my wonder at its size and comfort and cleanliness, and the splendor of its many vehicles and trappings. Yet it was not fine enough for the Commodore, who, seeing a wisp of straw on the floor of the carriage-room, larrupped the coachman with high words. Then a quick, spoken command:

"Bring out the mare!"

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Out came the mare in a jiffy, and Mr. Vanderbilt looked into her mouth and felt her throat and legs, and said, presently, "Take her back, and have her bled in the morning."

He let down the shafts of a light road-wagon and rolled it to the middle of the floor.

"There's a good wagon," said he. "Take hold of the axle and heft it."

We did so, and were surprised at the lightness of the graceful thing.

"Not much heavier than a tom-cat," said the Commodore, "and it cost me ten thousand dollars."

"Ten thousand dollars! Why, it cost as much as a house!" said Mr. McCarthy.

"As much as some houses," the Commodore went on. "I sent for a good carriage-builder and told him to plan the lightest wagon that would safely carry my weight. He brought the plan for a fifty-eight pound wagon at fifteen hundred dollars. 'Twon't do,' says I. 'Make it just as strong and five pounds lighter and I'll double your pay.' Well, he came back by-and-by with a plan for a fifty-pound wagon for three thousand dollars. 'That's the best you can do, is it?' says I. 'Well,' says he, 'I might get it down a few ounces if I had time to study the problem.' 'Take time,' says I, 'and I'll pay

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you a hundred dollars an ounce for all the weight you can take out of the wagon, but you must keep it as strong as it is now.' He took four pounds off the weight of it, and the saving cost me sixteen hundred dollars a pound. Money is quite a stimulant if it's used right."

The gentleman stood looking thoughtfully at the Commodore. When the story was finished he struck the air with his hand, saying:

"Mr. Vanderbilt, that wagon is worth its weight in diamonds." We looked into his glowing eyes, and he went on: "Let me tell you why. If brains, rightly stimulated, can reduce the weight of a road-wagon without any loss of strength, let's see what they can do with our big, clumsy freight and passenger cars. If we could take a hundred pounds off every car in the country, think what it would mean. That weight could be turned from expense into income. Think of the saving in power and fuel. It would mean millions of dollars!"

"Well, boy, go to work on that proposition," said the Commodore. "I'll give you a dollar for every pound you save on every car that runs over my tracks. I wish to God that my boy Bill had your push!"

"You are very kind, sir," said McCarthy.

"Look out for the weight of your head," Mr.

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Vanderbilt continued; "it's your freight-car—remember that—and you don't want to carry any sap in it. Let me tell you a story: Bill is a fat, good-natured cuss, and wants to take it easy, like all boys with a rich father. I told him that I wouldn't have him loafing around, and I sent him down on the farm and put him to work there, and Bill is getting along. He played a good joke on me, and I've made up my mind that he'll do for the railroad business.

"He says to me the other day, 'Father, I need some manure for the farm.'

"'Well, boy, how much do you want?' I says.

"'Seven or eight loads,' says he.

"'How much 'll you pay a load?' says I.

"'A dollar a load,' says he.

"'All right,' I says to him, 'come over to the car-stables and get all you need at that figure.'

"'What do you suppose the cuss done to me? He come over and got eight schooner loads!'

Mr. Vanderbilt roared with laughter.

"'You're no farmer,' I says to him. 'Come right over and learn the railroad business.'"

The Commodore pushed the road-wagon back into its corner.

"On your way to Pittsburg?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," Mr. McCarthy answered, with a sly wink at me.

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"Anything more to say?"

"No, sir."

"That's good. It's a wise man that knows when he's said enough. Good-night."

Mr. McCarthy and I left to go to our inn.

"On your way to Pittsburg?" said the hand-made gentleman, repeating the query of the Commodore. "How did he know that I was going to Pittsburg?"

"He's been at work on your programme, perhaps," I suggested.

"And has a hand in the affairs of the Central system," my friend went on. "That's his way of telling me. He has bought the Harlem and Hudson River roads, and has the ring in the bull's nose, and the continuous route is now a certainty. But we are not to talk too much. You can make up your mind that the Commodore knows all about us. I probably don't say or do much that isn't reported to him. A foolish word or two and he would be done with me."

My friend went to see Miss Manning, but soon joined me at the inn and reported that she was not at home.

At midnight we were on our way to Philadelphia in a draughty coach. It was an up-to-date train, equipped with the Miller platform, coupler,

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and buffer, which gave it a continuous floor and cane-woven seats, and the trainmen carried the new movable globe lantern. The rails were joined so as to soften the tread of the wheels, but still the bang, bang of them at the rails' ends filled the train with its clamor. We had brought a couple of shawls with us, and we used them for pillows, and lay half reclining on the hard seats beneath our overcoats. We slept a little in spite of the roaring wheels and rattling windows and the shriek of the trainmen at all the stops and the snore-streaked, chilly silences that followed, and rose stiff and sore at daybreak to wait for the west-bound train. It was hard travel, but far easier than that of the stage-coach, of which my mother had told me, and in those days it seemed like the height of luxury. All next day and another night we travelled, and Mr. Carnegie met us at the Pittsburg depot at eight o'clock.

He was a man of about thirty years, with a full brown beard and keen, gray eyes and an alert and courteous manner. He showed us through the Union Iron Mills, where they had begun to make and handle castings heavy as a house by steam-power, and as easily as a lady swings her fan. There weapons for the war with distance were being made. Bones of the

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mountains were melting in great heat and running into rails and beams to bridge the pathless fields and the river chasms.

"I want to talk with you about the rail problem," said McCarthy.

"It's nearly solved," said Mr. Carnegie. "The rail of the future will be made of Bessemer steel. It can stand heat and cold and heavy pressure. We'll be making them here as soon as possible. I think within a year or two this company will be able to fill your orders."

It was a warm day in April, and Mr. McCarthy and I had removed our coats. The city was celebrating the surrender at Appomattox, and, driving toward the depot, we came into full streets and met a procession led by cavalry.

"I think we had better get out and take the sidewalk," said Mr. Carnegie.

We left the carriage, and suddenly the gentleman said, "I must go back after my coat."

"Why?" the other asked.

"It wouldn't be polite for me to walk in the streets without a coat."

"Here, take mine," said Mr. Carnegie, as he removed his own, which McCarthy declined.

It was an odd exhibit from the old and new schools of gentlemanhood, of the formality of Chesterfield—of which Mr. McCarthy had long

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been a student—and the simplicity of Abraham Lincoln.

“Thank God, the war is over,” said Mr. Carnegie, as he went on, “but the military spirit is everywhere, and it will die slowly. I feel it more and more in business. Do you know that business is beginning to be a kind of warfare in which victory is the chief end, and all is well that leads to it? War is a crime. It sanctions murder and teaches dishonesty.”

“I have felt the spirit you complain of,” said the hand-made gentleman. “In my business there are scouts and spies, and I have had trouble in which violence and threats of murder were resorted to.”

“It’s the teaching of war, and battles of business are coming in which blood will flow, and the gun and torch will play their part.”

The distinguished railroader shook his head, and his face kindled with old Celtic fire as he thought of war’s iniquity. He was unlike, and yet very like, my friend McCarthy. They had both gone through the same hard school of poverty, and with like endowments had reached the same high footing. A friendship began between them of much value to both.

As we sat in the office of the young Scot he explained his signal system, and spoke of other

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needs, especially of better rails and road-beds and comfortable sleeping-cars, and the continuous trip to Chicago. Both clearly foresaw, in part, the great things which have come to us. I remember that McCarthy made me think him rash when he spoke of moving hotels that would some day convey one across the continent.

They dived into the past also, and began to talk of their boyhood. We had gone out to look at the new Woodruff sleeping-car, and, dined and returned to Mr. Carnegie's office, where we spent the evening together. I sat by and listened to the talk of the others, and I remember well how it thrilled me.

Carnegie had spoken of the war spirit, which had begun to show itself in business. The brave ventures of these two had in them a touch of the hazard-loving, heroic courage of the soldier. I thought of this, and yet I had no suspicion that they were to be great generals in the new war. God had armed them for the mighty struggles of peace. They had learned that when two forces were joined something comes of it vastly greater than their sum.

"I wish you would help me to account for you," said McCarthy. "Tell me how you got it all."

"Oh, you mean this stupidity and this luck

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of mine," said Carnegie, with a smile. "It's a good deal to account for, but I'll try.

"I went into business when I was six years old—raised pigeons and rabbits. Other boys helped me, and were rewarded by having rabbits named after them. My hero was Wallace Bruce. Often I had to pass a graveyard at night, and was a bit afraid of it. Then I used to say to myself that Wallace would not be so foolish, and went on with a better heart in me. In many a time of trouble I have asked myself what Wallace would do, and have tried to do it.

"We came to America' when I was eleven, and I began work across the river, in Allegheny City, at one dollar and twenty cents a week. You know this is a time of business combinations. I made one of the first on record. It was this way: I got to be a messenger boy at two dollars and a half a week, and learned the names of all the business firms, in their proper order, on the leading streets. There were four of us who delivered for the telegraph company, and each got ten cents when a message took him beyond city limits. There was a contest between the boys for these messages. I got them together, and suggested that the extra fees be divided equally. We made a sort of pool, or trust, and never quarrelled again. You see, I am at heart a

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peacemaker. I have always worked along that line—putting two and two together, and establishing harmony between them.”

“That is what Lincoln has done,” said McCarthy. “At last he has brought the North and South together, and begun to establish harmony.”

“He is the first gentleman in the world,” said the other.

“I know he is a very great one,” said McCarthy, “but I wish he were a little more particular in his dress and manners. I don’t believe he’s read the *Letters of Lord Chesterfield*.”

“He is the modern democratic gentleman,” said Mr. Carnegie. “He has shown us how little dress and manners have to do with it.”

Mr. Carnegie stopped, for suddenly a man had rushed in upon us.

“My God!” he sobbed, as he sank into a chair with tears running down his cheeks, “Lincoln has been assassinated!”

Outside bells had begun tolling, and we could hear the running of many feet.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST THROUGH CARS, AND THEIR BURDEN AND BAPTISM



HE had little heart for the rest of our business. The whole city was like the house of mourning. Shops and mills were closed, and the street crowded with those who could neither sleep nor rest nor cease talking. Some wept, some prayed, some told of fearful dreams and strange imaginings. I heard men declare that they had seen blood dripping from the flags just before Lincoln was shot.

We went to one of the mines, and then to Harrisburg, and waited for the funeral train. The car which Mr. Lincoln had used on the United States military road was to convey his body to the home he had left long before to continue the work now finished.

The car of the president of the Baltimore road, with its parlor, bedroom, dining-room, and kitchen, was to convey the family and their

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immediate friends to the same destination. These cars were to be transferred from one road to another, and rolled into Springfield, Illinois. As a railroad enterprise, it marked the beginning of new things. The train came in a rain at 8.30 on the evening of April 21st, its cars and engine heavily draped. We had telegraphed for permission to ride on the pilot-engine, which was to lead the way north half an hour ahead of the train. About midnight word came to us that our request would be granted. Next morning at 10 the bearers arrived at the depot with the body, which had been lying in state at the City Hall of Harrisburg, and the bearers conveyed it to the funeral car. Big panels of plate-glass in the sides of this car enabled one to see the coffin from the street level. The engine had her bell muffled, and large portraits of Lincoln, draped with black crape edged with silver lace, on either side of her cab.

At 10.30 we left on the pilot engine.

Well, my children, we began to know, then, what had happened. Oh, it was a wonderful thing to see and feel—the love of millions! The railroad—why, it was a way of sorrow sprinkled with tears. North to Albany and west to Springfield the people stood deep on either side of the long ironway. I saw them waiting patiently in sleet and rain, some weeping, some kneeling

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as we passed, thinking, no doubt, that he they loved was among us.

We left the pilot-engine in Philadelphia and hurried to a city on the Erie road, where we had work to do. We reached Albany some days later, about an hour ahead of the funeral train. There the beloved President was to be taken from the train and borne to the State-House, so that those of the north country might have a look at him. We waited among tens of thousands gathered in the streets, and the train came at midnight. I shall never forget the hush that fell upon all as the body passed in the darkness, and the low, tremulous murmur of the crowd. It was like the sound of a great bass string when it is lightly touched—it was the note of a people's sorrow. Slowly, silently, we made our way to the State-House. All about us men and women were sobbing, and we said not a word to each other.

For a moment my tears blinded me at the bier, for there by the coffin-head stood Pearl, in the uniform of a sergeant, with three medals on his blue cape. A squad of veterans walled the passage. Pearl stood calm and erect, with strange authority in his scarred face. He was the soldier again. A little ahead of me, as I walked in line, were Jo and Colonel Busby. I

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saw the Colonel seize the hand of Pearl and speak to him, but only a word. I did my best to gain the side of Jo, and failed—there were so many between us. Soon I had lost sight of them in the crowd and the darkness beyond the open doors. It would all have been different maybe—all in these latter years of our history—but for those twenty feet or so that lay between us that night. Just that little glimpse of her face, ennobled by our common sorrow, revived my love of her, and then I knew that even if I lost her I should never lose that. I hoped that we should find them next day, and so contented myself.

McCarthy and I walked to our inn together, and talked of the wonderful things we had seen and of the great captain of the people. We had read many columns in the press which had told of the gentleness of his heart and of his simplicity, which had amounted to uncouthness in the view of some.

"The outside of a man isn't of so much importance, after all," said my friend, as we were going to bed. "The gentleman is a lover of men, and seeks not to charm but only to serve them. And when he passes away it is as if there were some one dead in every house that knew him. Let us pray God to help us."

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We knelt by our beds in silence, and so ended one of the saddest days in my history.

Next morning I tried to find the Colonel and Jo, but with no success. I found Pearl, soon after dinner, sitting on the steps of an old church. His head rested on his hands; his cheeks were tear-stained.

"Did you know Mr. Lincoln?" I asked.

"Yes," said he.

"Tell me about him," I said, as I sat down by my friend.

"Oh, you'll hear of that some time," he answered. "I'm goin' to stop talkin' and mournin', and go back to Rushwater and get to work."

"Let's find McCarthy," I said, and we rose and walked toward the Delevan House. "Last night I saw you shake hands with Colonel Busby," I remarked.

"Yes; I knew the Colonel long ago, and we met here yesterday," he said.

"Do you know where they are now?"

"They left this morning to make a trip around the world. She is to be married on their return."

"Married! To whom?"

"I cannot tell you."

So it happened that I gave up the last dream of my youth.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST BATTLE OF PEACE



THE end of the war was come, and McCarthy and I felt a sense of shame and sorrow that we had had no part in it—he, because of his wooden leg; and I, because of those who were dependent upon me. But soon we were to find ourselves in the first great battle of peace, one of those of which the iron-master had spoken.

The States had put aside their jealousy, and begun to pull together in enterprises the like of which had never been known. We were laying iron rails across the deserts, and would soon be scaling the Rockies with them. Engines had climbed the Alps and swung in little curves, hauling a forty-ton train over Mont Cenis and the Semmering at twelve miles an hour. But the work we had begun was vaster and more difficult.

It was in January, 1866, when we were to-

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gether in Albany, that the gentleman said to me one day:

"The battle is on. I knew it was coming, although I haven't said anything about it. The Central is fighting the Commodore. He has so much power in the board that they're afraid of him. In summer they've been sending their south-bound freight by the river boats. In winter, when the river was closed, of course they've been glad to use the Vanderbilt roads to New York. The Commodore has got ugly, and begun to jerk the bull ring."

"The bull ring!" I exclaimed.

"Exactly," he went on. "It's the middle of January, and the ice is a foot thick on the Hudson, and, somehow, the Central freight doesn't move. They've begun to yell at the Commodore, and he answers, 'Use the boats.' They answer, 'The river is frozen.' He says, 'Well, pull your trains into Albany on time, and I'll do my best for you.'

"Now, there's where he's got 'em. They can't get here on time, and never do. Their freight is piling up, their passengers never make their connections for the South. The Commodore's trains used to wait, now they leave promptly on time. Lately there's been something the matter with the tracks on the east side of the river, and

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Mr. Vanderbilt's trains haven't been able to reach Albany at all."

The gentleman paused, and began to laugh.

"The Central yards and storehouses are overflowing, patrons and stockholders have set up a howl," he went on.

"What does it mean?" I asked.

"Progress," he answered. "God has found the will of a Cæsar to perform His wonders. When it's time for a great thing to be done, it's done, and little people have to get out of the way."

"But the bull ring seems to me rather oppressive," I suggested.

"It is oppressive, and a godsend, too, when the bull won't lead," said the gentleman. "What would you do with men like Richmond and Drew? Would you try to persuade them? Suppose, too, there were a lot of people who expected you to bribe them out of the way? Why, in such a case we need power, and it's down at No. 10 Washington Square. In a month Mr. Vanderbilt will own the Central lines, then—"

The gentleman paused, and turned and looked at me.

"Why, it's the beginning of a new emancipation," he said. "It will break the bonds of distance and set us free. In a few years we shall

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take our train in New York and leave it in San Francisco. The desert plains will be settled and tilled, and there will be great cities where there's nothing now but gophers and wild sage. Why, in the Far West there's land enough for all the oppressed of Europe."

It was the first time that I had heard the phrase now so well worn.

Within a week new schedules were established, and Central freight and passengers went on without delay.

"It's all settled," said McCarthy. "My dream is coming true. Soon there'll be one system from New York and Boston to Chicago."

But things not so cheerful were pressing on us. My mother and sister and I had taken a small furnished house in Albany, and fitted up a room for the gentleman, agreeably with his own plan, for he had been urgent in his wish to live with us. Months had passed, but the room was still unoccupied. My sister had made it cosy and homelike, with the pretty arts of a school-girl.

"Don't you think it's lovely?" she said to me one day.

"Oh, it's a charming room!" I exclaimed.

"I wonder why he doesn't like it?"

"I think that he does like it."

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"But he's only been here once since it was ready," she answered. "Just one look at that room was enough for him."

She turned away, and when I went and put my arm around her waist and kissed her I saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"You silly child," I said, "you are fond of him!" I had not dreamed of such a thing, and yet I ought to have known it.

Sarah began to laugh, and ran away from me and up-stairs to her room. The revelation worried me, and that very day I had a talk with my mother about it.

"Sarah will get over that," said she. "All boys and girls have their little troubles. You had yours, and have recovered."

"Not yet," was my answer. "If it takes hold of her as it took hold of me, God pity her. I shall not fall in love again."

"I'm sorry to hear you say that," said my mother. "Jo treats you very badly. Sarah had a letter from her the other day, and there was not a word for you in it. They are in India, and intend to stay there for a year or so. It seems rather strange to me."

"There's some reason—I'm sure she means well," I insisted.

That evening McCarthy and I sat together in

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his room at the Delevan writing letters until midnight.

"Speaking of the ring in the bull's nose," he said, "what do you think of that?"

He passed me a letter from a firm of New York lawyers in behalf of Maud Isabel Manning. They demanded that he keep his promise to marry the young woman or pay a "reasonable sum" in damages. That sum should be, in their opinion, forty thousand dollars.

"I'm in an awful mess," he said, as he turned to me with a troubled look in his face. "There's a quotation from Ecclesiastes that fits the case pretty well:

"'I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands.'

Jake, you know now why I couldn't go and live in your house, with this thing hanging over me."

"I do not quite understand you," I said.

"Why, as times are, if I had to pay that sum of money it would ruin me," he declared. "I don't see how I can go to law with them and smirch myself and you with scandal, to say nothing of the girl—"

"You needn't worry about her," I interrupted, with a smile. "As to myself, I'll tell all I know as publicly as you please."

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"I feel disgraced enough already," said he, "but worse things are coming. I'm not going to lie down and let them rob me. I shall fight them, but not with your testimony."

"I am your friend—" I began.

"Wait," he interrupted, as he closed his desk. "Heron, I'm in love with your sister. I have never told her or any one. It may be a hopeless love; but, you see, it won't answer for you to have anything to do with this case, and I must keep away from your house until I am done with it. Your sister is sacred to me. I must keep her name as far from mine as possible until I am vindicated and free."

Then James Henry McCarthy—a gentleman than whom no knight of old had better chivalry—shook my hand and bade me good-night.

CHAPTER VII

McCARTHY'S FIRST BATTLE WITH SATAN



THOSE days there were few if any bribe agreements made in Albany. Sometimes a member would find money in his mail from unnamed but not, probably, from unknown sources, or now and then a good team or a pair of oxen would be delivered at his farm as "a token of regard" or "the tribute of admiration." But "the lobby," while on its way, had not yet arrived at the capital.

It had been noised abroad that Vanderbilt had control of all the great railroads in the State except the Erie, and was likely soon to acquire that—Vanderbilt, then worth forty million dollars! Clever and unscrupulous men, who foresaw that he would have favors to ask of the Legislature, began to hustle for seats. Next session a number of these came on with credentials, some who had failed of election came also, and began to

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organize "the third house," as the lobby was called later.

We spent the last day or two of every week at Rushwater looking after the shop, which had an excellent manager, and things had gone well with us. The gentleman had been returned to the legislature without a word of opposition, and was known far and wide as the "cow-catcher." He stood for progress, and was, indeed, a little in advance of it, and pushed things out of the way. He was polite—always polite—but as firm as iron. No word of vituperation ever escaped his lips, and yet he had a most dreaded and terrible gentleness.

Suddenly, just before the beginning of the session, an important man came to us with plans for a bridge of vast proportions to span the Hudson at Poughkeepsie. It was a daring, a magnificent, design of the best engineers.

"What are you aiming at?" McCarthy asked.

The important man explained the purpose of the bridge.

"I like that," said McCarthy. "Now, please, say what you want of me."

"We want you to get the charter."

"Are you planning to spend any money here for that purpose?" McCarthy asked.

"We'll lay out any reasonable sum."

McCarthy's First Battle with Satan

"Then I won't have a thing to do with it—not a thing," said the gentleman. "The legislature must be kept clean."

"We're willing to put ourselves in your hands absolutely," said the important man. "I hardly need say that we should prefer to have the proposition go on its merits, but you know there's a new element here which is looking for money."

"And you rich men with big projects are going to raise the devil with us if you're not careful," said McCarthy. "Your plans are so vast and important that you will let nothing stand in their way—not even the price of a thousand men. Now, when you begin to buy votes you'll have more and more of it to do, and by-and-by Albany will be a pest-hole."

"We feel that as keenly as you do," said the other. "But, you know, those new fellows who have lately come here—Joe and Ed and Sam and Jim and Jack, and a score like them—they've got a following, and every day it increases. Their plan is to hold up the car of progress and demand our money."

"Put the matter in my hands, and I'll get your charter," said the gentleman. "But you must agree not to interfere or spend a cent of money."

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"We put ourselves in your hands absolutely," said the important man.

"Very well, then; I want to name three of the charter members of your board and the conditions under which that body shall begin its work."

"I think I can promise that."

"Well, talk it over with your associates, and let me have your answer in black and white as soon as possible," said the gentleman.

The answer came next day and was all that we desired, and McCarthy began a piece of work which deserves to be lifted out of the limbo of forgotten things, for it was the first big battle with Satan at the State capital. He saw the leading men in both branches of the legislature. He showed them the plans of the great bridge, and explained its purpose and made its value clear. They agreed with him. There seemed to be nothing in our way. But suddenly there came a change: the air was charged with opposition, and we knew that Joe and Sam and Ed and Jim, and other birds of their feather, had been at work.

"All right," said the gentleman; "we're in no hurry. They'll get hungry, and come to see us one of these days."

We had not long to wait. One evening, within a week, who should call at our room in

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the Delevan but Joe—the handsome, smiling, good-natured, witty captain of our enemies. He was in full dress, and his white hair and imperial were not the least of his assets.

“Thane of Glamis and Cawdor,” said he, with a smile and a polite bow, “you are soon to be king, and we must all know you!”

“I had not suspected that you were a weird sister,” said McCarthy.

“I am weird as the devil, but harmless,” our caller laughed, as he took the chair that my friend offered. “Could I see you alone for five minutes?”

“Certainly, if you wish,” said McCarthy. “But first I want to talk with you about that bridge project of mine. I’d thought of you in connection with the board of management. Perhaps you’d like to be a charter member.”

My mouth was open with astonishment. What could he be driving at? Was he compromising with the devil?

“I suppose the board will have the letting of the contracts?” our caller queried.

“Yes, and many other important powers,” said the gentleman. “They want substantial citizens who will work.”

“Sir, I am at your service,” Joe assured him, with another smile.

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"Have you any one to suggest for this board?" McCarthy asked.

"Why, there's Jack—what's the matter with Jack?" the other queried. "Then there's a new senator just elected from New York—a hustler and a particular friend of mine, with a silver tongue in his head. He's a protégé of Tweed—stands for important interests, and you'll have to reckon with him."

"What's his name?" was the query of the gentleman.

"Squares—Bonaparte Squares."

I had not heard of his election, and could scarcely believe my ears.

"I've heard of him," said the gentleman. "I believe he's a very popular and promising man, but I don't think he will do. We want men of standing and responsibility if we can get them. The board will be made up of the most substantial citizens, I tell you. It's no place for small fry. I'll consider Jack, and perhaps you can think of another man as available."

"Well, there's Jim," Joe suggested.

"All right—I'll consider Jim."

That was about the end of the interview, and within twenty-four hours Joe, Jack, and Jim had received the pledge they required. The charter went through with scarcely a murmur

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of dissent. The appointments were duly made according to the plans of McCarthy.

"It's a pity we had to have those fellows," I remarked.

"Oh, they won't like the job," said he, with a laugh.

We were at the first meeting of the board. Every member was present. The president rapped for order and said:

"Gentlemen, we have secured our charter, and now we have other important work to do. First, it is my duty to inform you that we have need of money and not a dollar in the treasury. I suggest that each member of this board lend the sum of ten thousand dollars to the enterprise, to provide a fund for preliminary expenses, and shall be glad to know your pleasure."

A motion was promptly made and carried, with only three dissenting votes, which called for that sum from each. The dissenting votes were those of Joe, Jack, and Jim. Joe rose, and protested with some feeling.

"Of course, if any member finds it a hardship," said the president, "he is at liberty to resign, but I trust that all are able to meet the requirements. The money is likely to be returned within a year from date."

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"It looks as if I were left at the pole," said Joe, as he sat down.

That was the last we saw of the three outwitted sharpers in the meetings of the bridge board.

Joe came to see the gentleman next day, and began his talk with high words.

"Did you want something for nothing?" said the latter. "Did you think I was naming you to pay for your influence? Why, I never bought a vote or a favor in my life, and never will. I told you plainly that we wanted substantial citizens only, and that it was no kettle for small fish."

The other smiled politely, and took off his hat. "I salute you," he said. "I thought I was something of a bluffer, but you've raised me out of the game. Good-day."

Not long after that Jim attacked the gentleman with gross invective on the floor of the House. McCarthy took the floor in a silence full of friendly feeling.

"The gentleman alleges that I am a liar," said he, with calm dignity. "Now, it may be that I have been deceiving myself and my friends, but of this I am sure, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has forgotten his manners, for I take it this is no place for the delivery of such information.

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He has said the like of one, also, who can never speak for himself again in this world, which is the more to be regretted. Without any disrespect to him, I may be permitted to doubt if he holds a brief for the judgment of the quick and the dead."

His assailant never quite recovered from this rebuke, and ever after was playfully called "the Judge."

McCarthy had ceased to speak of the gentleman within himself, but even his enemies did not fail to acknowledge and respect that great thing in him.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH WE TAKE SUPPER WITH THE FIRST CÆSAR OF THE CORPORATIONS



THE next day, on the steps of the Capitol, I met the Hon. Bonaparte Squares, a large, portly, handsome man with a deep, musical voice and a brown mustache and goatee. He seized my hand and shook it warmly.

"Old man," he said, "I've been looking for you ever since we parted at Niagara Falls. I heard you were here, and I want to have a talk with you."

I went aside with him.

"First," he added, "I want to pay you that fifty dollars with interest to date. I couldn't find you after the tight-rope performance or I should have paid you then."

"Give me the principal, never mind the interest," I said.

"I insist," said he. "Here are seventy-five dollars. Please forgive me—the thing had slipped my mind."

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I took only the fifty dollars, and asked how he had prospered.

"Oh, I'm getting along," said he. "I have a good law practice in New York and a house on Fifth Avenue. When you go to New York, if I'm there, please look me up."

I left Bony, for the gentleman was climbing the steps and we had much to do.

It was the middle of February, 1868. McCarthy was on some of the most important committees, including Ways and Means and Railroads, and had got his head above the crowd. Suddenly he was called to New York by the Commodore.

"Come to my house at 5.30 to-morrow," the telegram said.

McCarthy wanted me to go with him, and I went. On the way down he told me that any day he was likely to be served with papers in a suit by the talented young lady.

"So far they've done nothing but threaten," said he. "It may be it's only a bluff—an effort to scare me. I wish they'd act if they're going to. Have you said anything to Sarah about this?"

"Not a word," was my answer.

"Don't," said the gentleman. "Above all, don't let her know that I love her. If she gets a suitable offer she ought to accept it."

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"I have reason to believe that she is fond of you."

His lips trembled when he turned to me and said: "Heron, if I knew that, I should be the happiest of men. But, you know, these are her best days. She ought not to wait for me."

We rode part of the way over steel rails at fifty miles an hour in a new "parlor-car," which the road was trying, with a small buffet at the front, and where we could be served with fruit and sandwiches and tea and coffee.

We arrived at the Commodore's ten minutes ahead of time. The first Cæsar of the corporations came into the small reception-room to greet us, his straight, columnar form neatly fitted with a frock suit of black broadcloth. His dignified face, his white hair and choker gave him the look of an archbishop.

"Boy, I want to talk with you for five minutes," he said to McCarthy. "Come up to my room."

They were gone about half an hour, and on their return a clock on the mantel was striking six.

"Look here, boys," said the Commodore, "it's six o'clock; you must come in to supper with us."

"We're not dressed for company," said the gentleman.

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"You're all right," said Mr. Vanderbilt. "You know where the bath-room is—go right up an' wash if ye want to."

In two or three minutes we entered the parlors, and were introduced to a number of people; among whom was the Rev. Doctor Deems. It was a plainly furnished house, as things go now, but comfortable and homelike. The pictures were mostly family portraits, the largest of which was one of the Commodore's mother. There were models, in gold and silver, of steamships and locomotives on the mantel in the great front parlor. We took our seats at the supper-table.

At his best the Commodore was a playful and kindly man. There had been days when he wore his "railroad look," and his words were as thunder and lightning, but now he was like a school-boy. He ate only Spanish mackerel and a small venison steak, and drank a glass of champagne with it, and meanwhile said many droll things which have quite escaped my memory.

"For a man with a war on his hands, you're very cheerful," said Doctor Deems.

"Doctor, I never let business interfere with pleasure," said he. "I've reversed the old rule; my home is for comfort and pleasure, and I keep business out of it except when McCarthy comes."

Supper over, the ladies retired, and cigars were

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passed to the men, who remained for a smoke with the Commodore. He smoked big cigars, and always said that when he gave up smoking it would be time to give him up.

"What ship is that supposed to be?" the minister asked, looking at the golden model of a ship trimmed with flowers in the centre of the table.

"The *Caroline*," said the Commodore. "She was my first ship, and a beauty—brass and mahogany trim, and every comfort—and when she was all ready I gave Delmonico an order for the best dinner he could get up. He served it in her cabin, down the bay, one beautiful afternoon. I had landed at Staten Island, and sent for my dear old mother, and showed her all over the ship. Then I h'isted the flags, and took her into the cabin and sat her down at the table opposite me. There were a number of my friends seated with us. Mother was astonished. She looked around, and says:

"'Corneel, how the devil did you do it?'"

"Mr. Vanderbilt," said Doctor Deems, "I'm sorry, but I have to doubt your veracity."

"What do you mean?" the Commodore demanded.

"Well," said the Doctor, "when you sit there and tell me that your dear old Christian mother

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asked a question like that, it casts a doubt on the whole story."

The Commodore lowered his cigar, and said, with a sad smile:

"You're right, Doctor, she said it different—no doubt o' that. I have a miserable habit of swearing. Got it years ago, when my office was the top of a barrel down at the Battery. It seemed to be necessary those days, and sometimes I thought it was a help in the steamboat business, but of course it wasn't. I ought to be ashamed of it, and I am. I'm like a horse with a hitch in his gait: it's bad, but you can't blame the horse so much, after all."

There was a touch of greatness in his answer, it seemed to me, and gave us all a broader charity for the lion-mouthed men of that day, and God knows there were many of them. A young man who sat with us asked the Commodore if he might quote his answer to Doctor Deems.

"Why, sonny, I haven't the least objection," said the Commodore. "Everybody knows that I swear, and they ought to know why, if they don't."

He was always very frank in the matter of his faults and vices, and his word for the meanest thing in the world was "sneak."

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"Would you mind telling us the secret of your success?" the young man asked.

"There's no secret in success, boy," said the Commodore. "There's always a secret in failure, but not in success."

On our way to the St. Nicholas, McCarthy said to me: "To-morrow we're likely to see one of the greatest battles in history. It's between the Commodore on one side, and Fisk and his associates on the other."

"And what's the prize?" I asked.

"The Erie road," said the gentleman. "It's in the hands of wreckers and pirates who are cutting rates, and are likely to make us all kinds of trouble. The Commodore is buying the stock; it will probably be cornered to-morrow. I'm pretty well loaded, and am going to sell everything but my Hudson River and Harlem stock at the opening."

"I wonder what he wants of more trouble, with all his riches," I said. "He owns the Harlem, the Hudson River, the Central, the Lake Shore, and a part of the Michigan Southern. Isn't that enough?"

"But he wants to build up a great, impregnable system," said McCarthy, "the one we've been dreaming about. To be sure, he's got all the money he wants for himself and his posterity,

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but he keeps working and striving and building. Don't you remember that lecture of Mr. Emerson's, in which he spoke of man's love of the permanent? It was that love which slowly raised the Egyptian pyramids and the vast cathedrals of Europe. Now it is expressing itself in railroad systems, and tunnels through miles of mountain rock, and bridges over great rivers. We begin a long task, and know well that we shall never live to finish it; yet we strive and worry and suffer for it. Sometimes we give all for its sake, even our honor and our heart's blood. Like patriotism is our love for the permanent. We *must* work for those who follow us. It's God's will. Now you can understand why Vanderbilt is buying Erie: it's more rock for his pyramid. He's the great builder of his time. Drew and Gould and Fisk are destroyers; they're working for themselves. Vanderbilt is working for America; he ceased to work for himself long ago. He's Uncle Sam in flesh and blood, that's who he is—a plain, blunt, terrible fighting-man who leads the army of progress. No angel, but square. He could have robbed the Harlem bondholders, but he made them hang on till they got a profit. Next to Lincoln and Grant, he's the greatest man of his time."

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND BATTLE OF PEACE



WE walked down Broadway next morning, and turned into Wall Street some fifteen minutes before the market opened. Suddenly we heard a shouting and the scamper of many feet behind us. A handsome man with a young woman brilliantly gowned was approaching, followed by a crowd of newsboys. The man, who had a reddish-blond mustache and a white carnation in his buttonhole, was laughing as he flung handfuls of coin into the air, which fell upon the scurrying crowd. The face and carriage of the man were familiar, and I wondered where I had seen him before. We entered a hallway and watched them as they passed, but my eyes saw only the familiar figure of the handsome man.

"It was Maud Manning," said the gentleman, when they passed, "and the man was Jim Fisk, 'the Prince of Erie.'"

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"Jim Fisk!" I exclaimed.

"Jim Fisk," said he. "Used to peddle dry goods up North. Now he's a millionaire broker, and the greatest rake and dandy of his time."

Then it all came back to me—that summer day when I saw him drive into Waterville with four white horses and a big red van, and the wonderful lady at his side, and how, later, I sold my stock of goods to him.

"I think that my danger is passed," said McCarthy; "she has found bigger game."

That historic day of February 19, 1868, had begun, and yet none of all those who crowded the Street and its offices before eleven o'clock knew what was going on, save two, and we had just seen one of them. Not even the Commodore, who sat calmly smoking in his office on Fourth Street, had any suspicion of the frightful snare that lay before him until midday. We found him there at two o'clock. He had invested some five million dollars in Erie stock that day, and held more, even, than was authorized by the charter of the road.

"Mr. Vanderbilt, it seems to me that this Erie stock comes very easy," said the gentleman.

The Commodore was wearing his railroad look.

"Yes; they're up to their old tricks," said he, with an oath. "They're running a printing-

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press. They've been enjoined from issuing more stock, but they've no fear of God or the courts."

"I do not think that they are printing new stock," said McCarthy, "nor do I think that the Erie Company is technically disobeying the court."

"What, then?" the Commodore demanded.

"Well, when the injunction was served there was probably a large amount of stock all duly signed and sealed in the stock-books. I have reason to think that Fisk has stolen the books and put the stock on the market."

The Commodore ripped out an oath.

"I'll put 'em behind the bars—the suckers!" he exclaimed, with some vehemence.

"I suppose you'll stop buying," said the gentleman.

"Buying! How can I stop buying?" said Mr. Vanderbilt. "I've got to take all the stock they offer."

He turned away from us, and, as we were leaving, added:

"If you have information, put it in writing and let me have it to-morrow."

"I will," said my friend.

"It's the most deadly trap I ever heard of," said the gentleman, as we hurried away. "He's got to keep buying the stock as fast as they

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offer it. If he doesn't, it will go to nothing and ruin about every one in the Street, including himself, for probably he's borrowed millions on the stock as collateral. And the lower it goes the richer Fisk and his party will become, for they have sold it short; and if the Commodore holds it even they will grow still richer, for they have only to tear it out of the book and hand it over. They have got him between two fires, so that he has to provide them with the weapons for his own destruction. His own fortune is being hurled against him."

"Why do they wish to ruin him?"

"Why, their only hope of escape is in his ruin. Don't you see that if they bring him to his knees they have nothing to fear? Otherwise they may go to prison."

We walked in silence for a moment.

"I tell you, it's a critical time," McCarthy went on. "The future of our country is involved in this battle."

"How's that?"

"It will decide whether the work of progress shall be committed to brigands or remain in the hands of honest men. Our best hopes are in danger."

He stopped, and looked at me out of troubled eyes.

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"God!" he exclaimed, "suppose they cripple him and get control of the Vanderbilt roads! I shall sell everything I can and put the money at his disposal. Good-bye. I've got to hurry. Meet you at the St. Nicholas at seven."

So saying, he halted a cab and hurried away in it.

McCarthy was only one of many honest men who rallied to the support of the Commodore that day. It seemed as if God himself took command of their hearts, and, indeed, I love to think so, foolish as I may be. The forces of decency and good faith hurried to the field of battle. The game old fighting-man stood bravely counting out his treasure until ten million dollars had been surrendered. Then the artillery of the courts began firing, and on March 12th the president of the Erie Railway and all his directors, including James Fisk, Jr., Jay Gould, and Daniel Drew, fled from New York by night, taking with them all the books, papers, securities, and funds of the company. They took refuge in a hotel in Jersey City.

A well-known newspaper printed this paragraph next day:

In the suite of the Prince of Erie, who fled from this city last night, was his friend, the well-known actress, Miss Maud Isabel Manning.

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"Well, at last I'm free," said McCarthy, as we read the item. "How do you suppose I learned about the theft of the stock-books of the Erie Company?"

"I've no idea."

"It was through that somebody who has been sending me anonymous letters. For a day or two the books were in the rooms of Miss Manning."

The gentleman left me to return to his work while I went to Philadelphia on a special mission. A week later I finished my task and returned to Albany, arriving there about eight o'clock in the evening. To my great surprise, I found McCarthy at our house. My sister was in her best gown, and never looked lovelier. She ran to meet me, and put her arms around my neck and gave me a hearty greeting.

"You shall not move another step until you have congratulated me," she said.

"On what—your looks? They were never better or happier," I answered.

"But I'm happier than I look," she went on, "for I am to be the wife of the noblest gentleman in the land."

"It must be McCarthy," I said, as I turned to him.

"It is and it isn't," said he. "But I'm glad

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to confirm the report that she's consented to marry me."

"I congratulate you both," was my answer, and we were all so happy then that we just sat down and looked at one another and laughed until there were tears in our eyes.

"Well, after all, mother," I said, presently, "some good has come of that wretched journey of mine."

"All things work together for good if we will let them," said she.

"Then," said the gentleman, "there is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we may."

"Yes," said my mother; "and that divinity is in our own hearts—there's the wonderful thing about it."

CHAPTER X

THE CONTINUATION OF THE BATTLE



LATE in March the astute captain of the outlawed army established headquarters in Albany, and sought the help of the legislature to save him and his comrades from the doom that threatened him. The dogs of the law were on his trail and in full cry. Only his intimates saw him, for he had rooms in the Delevan with a secret passage to the street. He came and went under cover of darkness and the protection of his friends. He had millions of dollars at his command. He wanted that illegal issue of stock, which had been forced upon Commodore Vanderbilt, to be investigated and indorsed and sanctified by the legislature itself. Any man that required buying was to be bought.

Then it was that the third house began its career of infamy, and the friendship of the gentleman and the Commodore came to its end. There were buying and rebuying on both sides.

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One day a senator made a fierce attack upon the bill. In the midst of his speech a note was passed to him. He glanced at it, and continued his attack. Soon he veered about, saying:

"But, gentlemen, while this is one side of the subject, I am glad to say that there is another and a brighter one, to which in fairness I must invite your attention."

He went on with many and ingenious arguments in favor of the bill.

It was in the midst of this struggle that Bony came to me one day, and said:

"I want a frank talk with you. We have eaten and slept together, and you know me pretty well. I've always kept my word with you, haven't I?"

"I've no complaint to make," was my answer.

"Now, I'm going to be frank with you," he went on. "This Erie bill has got to go through. It's very important to me. If you can induce McCarthy to favor the bill, it will be worth a hundred thousand dollars to you."

"Oh, Bony! It's out of the question," I said. "He's against it, and he's not for sale. You couldn't buy him with all the money in the land."

"But he'll do anything for you," said the tempter. "He's a friend of yours, and they tell

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me he's stuck on your sister. All you've got to do is ask him and your fortune is made. Old Vanderbilt will drop him one of these days—there isn't a colder-blooded pirate in America. McCarthy would do better with us."

I was dazed by the calm assurance of the man who stood before me. It recalled the day when he waved the crowd out of our way as we were approaching the tent of the rope-walker. I laughed as I looked at him, and rather enjoyed his anxiety.

"You're barking up the wrong tree," I said. "There's nothing in it for you—not a thing."

"Look here," he said, "McCarthy wants money—don't he?—the same as the rest of us. Of course he does. Well, he can make thousands out of us for every penny that he gets out of the other side. Thousands, old boy! I'll double his fortune in a day—in a day, do you understand?"

Again I laughed.

"He wouldn't listen to you," I said. "McCarthy is honest."

"Honest fiddlesticks!" he exclaimed. "So am I honest; so are you; but we're going to pick up money when it falls at our feet, aren't we—wads of it? Why, old boy, there's half a million dollars in this thing for you and me and McCarthy."

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He was almost on his knees at my feet, and I had just enough of the "old boy" in me to let him go on, and he persisted with singular blindness.

"Look here," he continued, "I've got something up my sleeve. You're in love with the best girl in this glorious land of ours. I know all about it, and, old boy, I hold the key to that situation—do you understand? It's in my hand absolutely. She's promised to marry me. You do as I tell you, and I'll make the greatest sacrifice that one man can make for another. Now you can judge how important it is."

"I'm surprised to hear you make a proposition like that," I said, turning with disgust. "It's base, and unworthy of human lips."

"Oh, you've got a grudge against me—that's what's the matter with you," he added. "You can't forget that I won the girl in spite of you."

"You didn't play fair," I said. "You have deceived her and her father."

"Rats!" he exclaimed. "All things are fair in love and war, aren't they? Don't be a fool."

"Bony, there isn't an honest hair in your head," I answered. "He's a knave who isn't square with the girl he intends to marry."

"All right," said he. "I'll see McCarthy myself and leave you out of it."

The Continuation of the Battle

"You'd better keep away from him," I said, "or you'll get into trouble. We're against you and all men like you, and, as to the young lady, I warn you now that I shall do everything in my power to prevent the marriage."

"Bosh!" he hissed, as I was leaving him.

That night McCarthy attended a committee meeting at the Capitol. I had some letters to write, and remained in our rooms.

The gentleman returned about midnight, hatless and dishevelled.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Why, I've just had a little argument—that's all. I was coming home by my usual route; the street was deserted; and by-and-by I came to a stretch where every light was out for some reason. I suppose the stage had been set for its drama. Suddenly a man approached me from behind.

"Is this Mr. McCarthy?" he asked.

"It is," I said.

"You don't know me, and it isn't necessary," he whispered. "I have a simple business proposition to make, and all you need to know about me is the amount of my roll: I'll give you a hundred and fifty thousand dollars now if you'll favor the Erie side in this fight."

The gentleman looked at me and laughed.

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"I can imagine your answer," I said.

"No, you can't," said he. "It was the most telling, off-hand effort of my life."

"You hit him over the head," I suggested.

"So I did; and down he went," said McCarthy. "It was brutal, but there's nothing in the books to tell a gentleman how he should act when a man tries to buy his honor." He laughed again, and went on: "I just followed my own impulse and let fly. Sorry I lost my temper, but it's done now. It's a bad situation we're in here. Huge sums of money are dangled before men, and the weak go down. The Commodore has to hold up his end, I suppose. He's got to beat them or they'll ruin him, and then he finds some excuse in the great cause he stands for. I don't blame him so much, but I'm going to keep out of it for a while. It's got to be a matter of matching fortunes, and I'm sick of it. By-and-by I'll step into the firing-line."

Before the skirmishing ended, however, Drew deserted his camp, and the other captains of the enemy quickly came to terms, and the breach in the foundations of the house of Vanderbilt had been repaired. But the Commodore had had enough of Erie, and decided "to let those miserable suckers alone."

The battle was ended.

The Continuation of the Battle

My friends, we may well regret the evils that came of it, but I, for one, rejoice that a commercial enterprise involving the growth and welfare of a continent remained in the hands of a builder and fell not to the kings and princes of destruction.

For some two weeks we saw nothing of Bony, and when I met him one day at the entrance of the Capitol I observed a red scar on his forehead.

To my surprise, he stopped and greeted me.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Oh, that's where a mule kicked me."

"A mule!"

"Yes, and I didn't know he would kick," said Bony.

"All's fair in love and war," I quoted.

"Well, *I'm* not kicking," he said, with a smile, as we parted.

CHAPTER XI

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS



HAD seen Pearl often in hurried visits to Rushwater, but not since the Erie war began. For three years he had been hard at work in every department of the growing shop as superintendent. Its voices had turned from anger to affection; its people loved this man, for the years had proved him. He was like a father to them. I can think of scores of men and women who followed his counsel in those days of their youth and poverty.

I found him, soon after the events I have been describing, ill in his room at Rushwater. His eyes had been failing; one of his old wounds, which had cut deep into his head, was giving him sore trouble and affecting his sight. I was grieved to learn that he could scarcely see me. A young man from the shop was taking care of him.

I had been thinking of my gains, and they

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were large, for McCarthy had been kind and generous, and I was to have one of the highest offices in the gift of the State. But now, as I saw the failing of my old friend, I began to think of my losses, and was sorry—sorry that I had missed so much of the companionship and counsel of one of the greatest men I ever knew.

"I've missed you, Jake, I've missed you," he said, with trembling lips, as he held my hand in his.

I would have given it all then—all the money and the honor which had been mine—for that I had lost, and I have never changed my mind about it.

"My friend and fellow-citizen," said he, cheerfully, after a moment, "the Committee on Love and Marriage will now report. Has your heart changed, old boy? Do you still think of Jo?"

"As much as ever," I said. "Strange how it clings to me!"

"It's the real old-fashioned thing, an' rare as gold," said he. "I know what 'tis."

"I shall never marry," I said.

"Yes, you will," said he, with confidence.

"Why do you think so?"

"Because she loves you—that's why."

"But you told me that she was going to be married on their return."

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"So she is; and to you, old boy. You didn't understand me, did ye?"

"No."

"Wal, I didn't want ye to. I see that Squares had made himself solid with the Colonel. Squares had prospered, and won the friendship of grand folks. Squares had flattered the old man and spent loads of money on him. The Colonel was bound to have Jo marry Squares. I told her to take her father out of the country and stay until I sent for her. He was drinking badly, and, anyhow, I thought it would do him good to get away from his old friends. Jo and he made a kind of treaty: he promised not to write to Bony, and she promised not to write to you.

"The Colonel wanted to travel, and Jo had plenty of money—her grandfather left her his fortune. They stayed a year in England, where Busby was born, and were three years in Italy, India, and Australia. She wrote me that she'd spent the time in study, and felt sure that you wouldn't be ashamed of her. Why, Jake, she's never forgotten ye fer a minute! She was anxious to know whether your love would last or not, and made me promise to report to her every month, and I did. They've heard all the news about you and all the news about Bony."

"Where are they now?"

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"On their way to Rushwater," said Pearl. "They'll be here in this room at eight o'clock to-night."

I met McCarthy in the office of the shop, and when our work was finished we went to Pearl's room. It was 7.30, and I paced up and down, feeling the slowness of the clock-hands, while the gentleman sat by the bedside talking with our friend. Suddenly there came a loud rap at the door. McCarthy opened it, and in stepped the Colonel, erect as a statue, with his gold-headed cane in one hand and his shiny silk hat in the other. He was magnificent in a frock suit and silken waistcoat. He bowed and stepped lightly to the middle of the floor, and stopped as he saw Pearl lying on the bed. He gave me his hat and cane, and put his arms around the shoulders of the sick man.

"Old friend, I love you—I love you!" he said.

The Colonel turned with streaming eyes, and in a moment said to us: "My God, gentlemen, here is old Pearl Brown, the bravest man since Julius Cæsar! There is not one of us that's good enough to black his boots. I saw him lead a charge at Bull Run when the bullets were trimming him and cutting his coat to rags; but he didn't mind. He went right on—the bloodiest thing that ever stood on foot. Went right over

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the works of the enemy, and hit a gunner on the head with his flag-staff.

"When we picked him up his clothes were red, and one arm was dangling.

"'Boys,' he whispered, 'they shot my head off back there in the field somewhere. I saw it fall on the ground, an' I picked it up an' ran like the devil with it under my arm until I got here. It's right here beside me, an' I wish you'd bring it along—might need it some day.'

"When he lay sick in the hospital, Lincoln went to see him, and pinned a medal on his breast." The Colonel paused.

My dear old friend lay calmly holding the hand of Colonel Busby.

"I'm not to blame for it," he said, presently. "I didn't know what I was doin' after that piece o' shell hit me. I thought I saw my head on the ground, an' that I picked it up and ran as hard as I could, for I heard you fellows comin' an' thought you'd get it away. I forgot the enemy, an' was just runnin' to save my head. I struck that gunner because I thought he would take it away from me. Here is a braver man than I am."

He took my hand and drew me near him, and added: "Look at the scars on his face; they're a better badge than I have. Took that blow to

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save me. Do you remember him, Colonel? You used to know him as Cricket Heron."

"To be sure," said the Colonel; "but I would not have known him, he's grown so big and tall. If he is your friend, he is mine. Excuse me, I'm going to get Jo; she's over at the inn. Perhaps you'll have the kindness to go and fetch her," he added, turning to McCarthy.

They came in five minutes, the gentleman and Jo, and never have I seen the like of her. She was twenty-four past that day, and stood tall and erect, with glowing cheeks and eyes, in the full splendor of her young womanhood. I was ashamed to show my scarred face to her, and yet I would have travelled half my life to do it and know what she would say. She could not hide her joy, nor I mine. Our eyes filled as we greeted each other, and, somehow, I felt the truth in her little right hand—that she loved me.

Pearl made me blush with praise, and when I tried to disclaim the credit which he put upon me—knowing how small a thing it was—Jo commanded me to be silent, and said that I had no right to belittle her pride in a friend. The Colonel rose and stood erect, and stroked his white imperial.

"Attention!" he commanded, with that fine military manner of his. "Heron, old boy," he

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went on, as he touched his forelock and swung his hand in the air, "I salute you, and apologize for all the indignities of the past; and, dear friends, while we are giving out the medals of honor, I would respectfully invite your attention to this young lady. She is the greatest of all women—the dearest daughter in the land."

He turned to me, and continued: "You will remember, sir, my fondness for the flowing bowl and my many follies, which I would blush to mention. She—she, sir, with the tenderness of true womanhood, with the love that passeth all understanding, has lifted me up and made a man of me."

The Colonel was interrupted by applause, led by the gentleman, who rose and said:

"Mr. Chairman, I move that we give the young lady a vote of love and honor, and that we recommend her for promotion from daughter to wife, with the title of Mrs. and the rank of a great-hearted woman, as soon as we can find a man worthy of her. Greater than the man of the sword is the heroine of the home who has subdued its enemies with the strong hand of love."

"I second the motion," said Pearl.

"Question," I urged.

The Colonel bowed low, and in look, word, and manner rose to greatness, it seemed to me.

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"Those in favor will salute her with a kiss," said the old gentleman, as he embraced his daughter.

Then he led her to Pearl, who recorded his vote, after which he pinned one of his medals on her waist, and then the hand-made gentleman supported the motion. It was my turn next.

She laughed and turned away from me, her cheeks red as roses. Then she ran to the corner of the room, and hid her face in her handkerchief and cried a little, and I stole up and kissed her cheek and led her back to her chair, and every man of us had wet eyes for some reason.

"Now," said the Colonel, cheerfully, as he rose and went to the fireplace, "with your kind indulgence, I will sing you a song."

He sang an old lyric entitled *The Man of Scars*, pointing at Pearl and me as he roared along, and, really, it took all the shame out of me which had come of my injured looks. I sat down by her, and we had a little talk of "old times," as we called them.

Some one spoke of Bony.

"By the blood of the martyrs," said Colonel Busby, "he hasn't a scar on his body, and never will have unless he meets with an accident!"

"Which he has done," said the Pearl of great price, as he smiled at McCarthy.

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"I think we'd better go," said the gentleman.
"I'm afraid that our dear friend on the bench is growing weary."

We shook his hand and bade him good-bye, and then McCarthy and I walked to the inn where Jo and the Colonel. They were to start for Merrifield at six o'clock in the morning.

"You should see our shop before you go here," I said.

"You take my father to see the shop, and try to entertain Mr. McCarthy while you're here," she suggested.

The Colonel and I went together to the shop, then running night and day. We went through its long, busy floors, and by-and-by, with our cigars, in the office.

"My friend," said the Colonel, presenting me, "should be proud to have you visit me at my field."

"That cannot be," I said, "until I have your permission to propose to Jo."

"Heron, I've been a fool," he said. "I don't want to confess, but I can't help it, and then it doesn't matter much, for the fact is generally known. Forgive me, sir, and, believe me, I should like to have you for a son-in-law."

We returned to the inn.

"Mr. McCarthy has been telling me all about you."

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stables," said Jo to her father. "Perhaps he would be kind enough to show them to you."

"Glad to take you there," said the gentleman, as he went away with the Colonel.

"Did he invite you to Merrifield?" Jo asked.

"Yes, and more. He has consented—"

"Merrifield is delightful," she interrupted. "We live in the old house that was built by my grandfather. I've always said that if I ever had the luck to be engaged and married, I'd like it all to happen there."

I took her hand and said: "Look here, young lady, I've made up my mind that I shall turn the key in that door and keep you a prisoner until you've promised to marry me. You've established a sort of precedent in your treatment of poor Sam—don't you remember it?"

"Dear old Sam!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't have forgotten you if I had tried. He was forever talking about you, and to every letter he added a postscript, which contained the last news of C. H. He's watched your career very closely."

I sat down by her side, and drew her close to me.

"I really cannot wait," I said.

"Nor I," she whispered; and then I felt her soul in her lips, and I need say no more of that

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day, best of these many of which I have tried to tell you, save this: Jo and her father promised to delay their home-going to meet my mother and sister, who would be with us in the morning.

CHAPTER XII

THE STORY OF AN UNSUSPECTED HERO



ROSE early and met my dear friends, and told them the news, and received their congratulations. Then I told of Pearl's illness, and at my mother's request took them with me to his room. We entered on tiptoes. He was stroking the ear of his old dog, who lay by his bedside. His "jacket" hung on a chair, turned wrong side out, within reach of his hand, the medals pinned to its lining.

"Happy New Year!" he exclaimed, cheerfully, as he took my hand. "I've got to tell ye the truth now. My name is Brown—Henry Machias Pearl Brown, full-jewelled and a yard wide. I confess and throw myself on your mercy. I've lied like the devil. Do you blame me?"

"It's the man and not the name that's important," I said.

"It's a long story, but I'll make it short," he went on. "When I was a boy my father moved west—settled in northern New York. There I

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fell in love with a lily of a girl—oh, she was wonderful! I couldn't make up my mind that I was good enough for her. The minister used to tell us that we were all a lot o' worms, an' we believed it, but I thought she was the one great exception. I recollect that old text:

“‘ . . . The stars are not pure in His sight; how much less man, that is a worm.’

When I met an angel I naturally hesitated about offerin' her a worm. It didn't seem to me much of a compliment. Oh, I tell ye, we had to look out for the early birds! Ye see, the worm referred to was a caterpillar, and the minister didn't tell us about the butterfly. I tried every way to improve myself, but I waited too long. She married another an' a better man. I went away to the war, got my face all scrambled up by a piece o' shell, an' crawled into a lot o' bushes to die. I lay there an' kicked till my feet made a hole in the ground, but I didn't know what I was doin'. By-an'-by I felt suthin' pinchin' my hand. Seemed so 'twouldn't let me die; kep' a nippin' away till I raised my head. I could see a little out o' one eye, an' there was an' ol' settin' hen with her nest hid in the bushes, an' she was peckin' my hand. She gave me a cuff with her wings, an' told me t' git

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up an' go on 'bout my business, an' I did—crawled out on my hands an' knees, an' they found me an' patched me up. I felt all right, but I had 'this face on me. Come north, an' behaved 'bout as bad as I knew how. Got 'shamed o' my character as well as my face, so I dropped Brown, for that was the name o' my father, an' no better man ever lived. When I met you, Jake, I was nigh the end o' my rope. You made a man o' me. You was her boy—that's the reason."

His voice broke, and he pressed my hand to his lips.

My mother came and stood beside me with streaming eyes, and said:

"Henry Brown, I am Anne Jones."

"Anne Jones, come here," he said.

He felt her wrinkled forehead and her white hair with his hand. He seemed to be vainly trying to see her face. He was like one looking far away. "Oh, I can see you!" he said. "Hair as yellow as a corn-tassel, an' blue eyes an' cheeks as red as roses, an' feet like a fawn's. You are beautiful, an' I love you, Anne, I love you. I've wanted to tell you—these 'forty years."

It may be that she loved him, also, for she never left his side until one June day, more than a month later, we saw for the last time this modest, gentle, unknown hero of war and peace.

CHAPTER XIII

PEACE



HERE was a double wedding at Merrifield in September, and, next to McCarthy and myself, the happiest man there was Sam, who shook my hand before the ceremony to give me courage, and spoke a cheering word.

"You'll be glad you done it when it's all over," he said.

So glad have I ever been that I hold my peace when I think of that day and of her, the dearest blessing of my life. There are things which had better be let alone, even though one had the tongue of an angel. Such is that sense of pride and joy that came to me when I put my arms around her, and knew that she was mine at last. And, after all, the loves and marriages of the gentleman and myself are only small incidents of our history, which has to do with the loves and marriages of commerce, and there is yet a little to be added.

Peace

We went to Saratoga on our wedding journey. The day we arrived I met my old friend Swipes in the office of the Grand Union Hotel. He was cashier in the great gambling-house of John Morrissey. He told me that Bony had lost fifty thousand dollars in play the night before.

"It broke him," said Swipes. "He had to borrow a hundred dollars from the old man."

That very day I met Bony on the street.

"Look here, old chap," he said, as we stepped aside, "I'm broke, and if you'll lend me ten thousand dollars I can do you a favor."

He paused and looked into my eyes, but I made no answer.

"I know that McCarthy has been looking for evidence against the Erie party for their sins in Albany," he went on. "That's why he split with the Commodore. I can help him. I could tell him things that would put some of them behind the bars. The consolidation of the Central and Hudson River systems will be coming on this fall. I'll put a whip in your hands that will keep them out of Albany."

I found McCarthy, and brought the two men together. The gentleman listened while Bony set forth his evidence and promised two affidavits in support of it.

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"All right," said McCarthy, "bring your witnesses to me. If they're satisfactory, I'll buy your note for one year for ten thousand dollars, on the understanding that we're both acting in the interest of public decency."

Jo and I left for New York a few days later. I had a letter in my pocket to the Prince of Erie. It was from the Hon. Bonaparte Squares, and advised the Prince of certain facts in our possession, and gave him a word of warning. We thought that the letter should go straight to his hands, and I undertook to deliver it.

"He'll know who you are, and that will set him thinking," said McCarthy. "You may talk, if necessary, but don't say a word."

I turned into Broad Street with the letter early in the afternoon of Black Friday—that memorable twenty-fourth day of September, 1869. Those two cunning men, Fisk and his partner, had a corner in gold. For an hour its price had been mounting by leaps and bounds.

Wall and Broad streets were like brimming rivers full of boiling rapids and roaring whirlpools and slow eddies and deep undercurrents. Now and then one heard a shrill cry like that of a man drowning. The currents swept me along, wavering from curb to curb. A friend touched my arm and shouted:

Peace

"Shake, old man! We haven't much to lose, and we're lucky. Every minute now somebody is going broke."

I took my letter to Fisk's office. By that time the price of gold had begun to tumble. Fisk's door was open, and I walked in. There, in the middle of a large room, stood the greatest gambler of an age of hazards. He wore a coat of blue velvet with a white flower in its lapel. He stood by a small table, and was pouring champagne into a row of glasses. A basket of wine lay at his feet. The chairs around the room seemed to be filled with dead men, their faces ghastly white, their eyes staring. A colored boy passed the wine. The Prince of Erie raised his glass, and said:

"Boys, when you're picking a goose, the point is to get as many feathers as you can every grab, with as little squawking as possible."

He took the letter I carried, and went with me into the outer office, reading as he walked. Men crowded about us, seeking a word with Fisk. He turned to me, and said:

"Sit down a minute; I'm very busy now."

I took a chair, and watched the great gambler as he spoke to the men who pressed about him. He was jocular, good-natured, kindly.

"Cheer up, old fellow," he would say, with

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affectionate tap on the shoulder, "your turn will come one of these days."

I waited for an hour or more.

The market closed. The half-crazed players in this temple of fortune were moving out of its door. Soon the place was empty of all save the clerks and the Prince himself and two or three hangers-on.

As Fisk was turning to me a man of clerical dress and manners accosted him.

"Mr. Fisk," said he, "we need a fence around the cemetery up there in Bennington, and I've come to ask you to help us."

What a finish for that deadly day of torment!

The Prince laughed.

"A fence around a cemetery!" he exclaimed. "You don't need it. Those who are in can't get out, and those who are out don't want to get in, so what's the use; but here's fifty dollars."

He gave him the money, and turned to me, and said:

"Sorry I kept you so long. Come into my room a minute."

I followed him, and he sat down beside me. He had carefully considered his plan.

"I've had a hard battle," he said. "War is war, whether you fight with guns or money. Here in Wall Street we cut close to the heart

